

DE GRUYTER

*Ralph W. Mathisen,
Danuta Shanzer (Eds.)*

THE BATTLE OF VOUILLÉ, 507 CE WHERE FRANCE BEGAN

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The Battle of Vouillé, 507 CE
Where France Began

Millennium-Studien

zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr.

Millennium Studies

in the culture and history of the first millennium C.E.

Herausgegeben von / Edited by
Wolfram Brandes, Alexander Demandt, Helmut Krasser,
Hartmut Leppin, Peter von Möllendorff

Band 37

De Gruyter

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and
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ISBN 978-1-61451-127-4
e-ISBN 978-1-61451-099-4
ISSN 1862-1139

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de> abrufbar.

© 2012 Walter de Gruyter, Inc., Boston/Berlin
Printing: Hubert & Co. GmbH & Co. KG, Göttingen
∞ Printed on acid-free paper
Printed in Germany
www.degruyter.com



Commemorative plaque in Vouillé, France, laying claim to the site of the battle:
“Vouillé-la-Bataille. It is in these places where in 507 Clovis, king of the Franks, defeated the
Visigoths. Then France began.” Photo by R. W. Mathisen.

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Foreword

DANUTA SHANZER

Significant chronological boundaries can be both flexible and negotiable. Anywhere one draws one may prove disputable or even demonstrably wrong, but at some point *all* will agree that the change under discussion has occurred. This is the old paradox of the *sorites*. How many grains of sand constitute a heap? One stone is a stone. Two stones are a coincidence. Three stones are a wall. There is only one answer to this disconnect: accept complexity and vagueness, but also use boundaries as illuminating heuristic devices that can be good to think with. Which events at which dates changed things?

In the past, it has been presumed that the most significant battle that Clovis fought was the Battle of Tolbiac, ca. 496, in which he defeated the Alamanni. This battle, it was thought, set the stage for Clovis's adoption of Nicene Christianity, which virtually foreordained Clovis's victory at Vouillé over the Arian Visigoths in 507. As a consequence, even though the battle was suitably commemorated in local venues (Fig.1), Vouillé has received scant attention and little respect in modern scholarship.¹ The present volume, however, rehabilitates the Battle of Vouillé and establishes it not only as a military milestone in the history of the Franks and their king Clovis, but as a crucial prelude to the rise of medieval and modern Europe. It engages in a debate both about events (what actually happened?) and about memory and representation. The contributions in the volume handle concrete problems about the battle itself, its causes, its immediate as well as later reception, and its ultimate importance and significance.

Clovis fought Alaric II of the Visigoths at a place variously called Voglada, Boglada, Boglodoreta, or the Campus Vogladensis. Alaric perished in that battle, which was seen as the decisive element in the expulsion of the Visigoths from Gaul into Spain. Gaul (soon to be Francia) was thereby left largely to the Franks. So, at the very least, the battle marked a point at which the Franks gained a significant amount of territory in Gaul. Its date, fortunately, is undisputed. The location of the battle, however, is not, and currently is

1 To cite but a few of a multitude of examples, a major publication on Clovis and the Franks, *Die Franken Wegbereiter Europas: Vor 1500 Jahren, König Chlodwig und seine Erben*, vol. 1 (Mainz, 1996), barely mentions Vouillé; and L. Bourgeois, ed., *Wisigoths et Francs autour de la bataille de Vouillé (507)* (2010), nominally about Vouillé, does not in fact contain a contribution about the battle.

Vouillé la bataille en Poitou 2007
 507 Première bataille de Poitiers 2007 Célébration nationale
 15^e centenaire



Hier

- Choc entre peuples en mouvement
Francs et Goths, parmi les précurseurs de l'Europe.

En 2007

- Concerts, expositions, animations festives, colloque historique international, création d'un espace 507, etc.

Demain

- Une nouvelle histoire d'Europe ?

Etape fondamentale dans la réunification de la Gaule par Clovis

« Du Xe milliaire de Vouillé via Poitiers, et de Tournai à Tolède par de nombreuses autres cités... »

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" Patrimoine, Culture, Tourisme, pour découvrir Vouillé "

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Fig. 1: Flyer announcing the celebration of the 1500th Anniversary of the Battle of Vouillé, held at Vouillé, Source: Gerard Pironneau, President, Association Vouillé et son Histoire.

identified either as modern Vouillé, northwest of Poitiers, or as Voulon, south of Poitiers.² As a plaque at Vouillé, now called Vouillé-la-Bataille, has it, the battle took place “dans ces lieux” and “alors commença la France” (“then France began”). Although one easily could dismiss that proclamation as mere chauvinistic propaganda of the local historical society of Vouillé, the studies in this volume suggest that this is in fact a justifiable assessment of the significance of the battle.

History belongs to winners. Clovis and the Franks are no exception. Late Antiquity witnessed the establishment of numerous barbarian successor kingdoms. Of these one alone, that of the Franks, would survive down to modern times in a form that could plausibly claim continuity of rule and territory with the early Middle Ages, even if not of form of government.³ This claim had already been made in the 16th century. Estienne Pasquier in his *Recherches de la France* 2.1 (1596) exalted the French (against the Vandals, Lombards, Ostrogoths, and Burgundians) as the only people who had found their greatness among the spoils of the Roman Empire, who continued to flourish and to hold onto their territory without enduring kings other than those who attached importance to Gaul as their true dwelling place.⁴ So national pride in continuity started long ago. Gibbon (1737–94) agreed: “The Franks, or French, are the only people of Europe who can deduce a perpetual succession from the conquerors of the Western empire.”⁵ The same tune sounded in the *Abrégé de l'Histoire de France* published for the Royal Military Academy in 1789.⁶

France was thus a special case. And Clovis and the events of his reign have always featured in France historiography.⁷ Although the Merovingians were not just before France, but also before Germany,⁸ Clovis, we are told, has never

2 See Mathisen's essay on Vouillé in this volume.

3 Although some also might make a case for Anglo-Saxon England.

4 E. Pasquier, *Les Recherches de la France* (Paris, 1596), 27. “Nous seuls, qui avions comme les autres trouvé nostre grandeur dedans les despoilles de Rome, sommes demourez redoutez et florissans iusques à huy, sans avoir enduré la possession d'autres Roys que de ceux qui ont fait estat de la Gaule comme de leur vray séjour.”

5 E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 6th American ed. (Philadelphia, 1830), 2.366. He continues, “But their conquest of Gaul was followed by ten centuries of anarchy and ignorance.”

6 “Clovis . . . affermit par ses victoires les fondements de la monarchie française.” quoted in A. Thierry, *Récits des temps mérovingiens: précédés de considérations sur l'histoire de France*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1842), 1.21.

7 For the baptism in particular, see *Clovis chez les historiens* (Paris/Geneva, 1996).

8 Alluding of course to P. J. Geary, *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (New York, 1988).

dominated popular historical consciousness and culture in the German-speaking world in quite the same way.⁹

The Creation of France

The questions of national continuity and the formation of France (dare one call it “natiogenesis”?) are additionally linked to religion. Most of the barbarian peoples of the western empire were historically pagan or Arian Christian, so relations with Nicene Christian Romans in the successor kingdoms required accommodation and negotiation and sometimes entailed conflict. In late-5th-century Francia the Franks were pagan, the Burgundians of mixed religion, both Arian and Nicene, whereas the Visigoths were Arian rulers of Nicene Gallo-Roman subjects. Elsewhere in the west were the Arian Vandals and Ostrogoths and the pagan (so it seems) Alamanni, to name a few.

The long-term success of the Franks and the survival of Francia have often been ascribed to Clovis’s decision to be baptized as a Nicene Christian. His choice, so it goes, removed a barrier between himself and his own Roman subjects and allowed him to drive wedges between rival Arian kings and their Roman subjects, permitted him to harness the power of the Nicene church, and enabled him more easily to be recognized by Emperor Anastasius in Constantinople.

This of course leaves aside religious claims about true faith as opposed to paganism or heresy, of the sort promulgated by the great Counter-Reformation historian Cesare Baronio (1538–1607), Cardinal, Prefect of the Vatican Library, and key figure in the promotion of the baptism.¹⁰ He introduces his eloquent Latin account of the “people that walked in darkness” as follows: “Look at God’s providence! For, at the time when such dense shadows obscured the world everywhere and beclouded the peoples, to such an extent that there was not a single Catholic prince in Europe, in Gaul, clearly by divine act, the shining star of a new light appeared; by it the whole Catholic Church would be illuminated for ever after.”¹¹ Gibbon joined religion and politics, cannily drawing an explicit

9 See M. Becher, *Chlodwig I: Der Aufstieg der Merowinger und das Ende der antiken Welt* (Munich, 2011), 9. One’s agreement with him is qualified. He may be right about contemporary Germany, but not so about 19th- and early-20th-century Germany, which he does not really discuss in his book.

10 C. Baronius, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1613). M. Yardeni, “Le christianisme de Clovis aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles,” *Bibliothèque de l’école des chartes* 154.1 (1996): 162, although she cites Géraud Cordemoy (1685) does not mention that the emphasis on Clovis as the first Catholic princeps etc. had appeared some time before in Baronius.

11 Baronius, *Annales Ecclesiastici* 612: *Sed vide providentia Dei. Quo enim tempore tam densae tenebrae operirent ubique terram, et caligo populos, adeo ut nullus penitus in universe*

comparison between Clovis and Henri IV: "His savage character and the virtues of Henry IV suggest the most opposite ideas of human nature; yet some resemblance may be found in the situation of two princes who conquered France by their valour, their policy, and the merits of a seasonable conversion."¹² It is perhaps significant that it was Baronius who advised Clement VIII in 1594 about whether Henri IV, as a lapsed heretic, should be taken back into the Catholic Church and suggested that he should be.¹³ It is interesting to note that the 1867 edition of the *Annales Ecclesiastici* seems to insert an extra echo of close-to-contemporary events in Baronius's account of how God shone in the heart of the king of the Franks to make the Catholic faith glorious.¹⁴ Baronius had reason to be preoccupied with the beliefs of the kings of Franco-Gallia, be they ancient or contemporary.

The future of what would be France is thus closely linked to Clovis's baptism. That would be all very well, if it were possible to date that providential event securely and thus contextualize it in Clovis's career. Unfortunately there have always been severe problems with the sources for the chronology of Clovis's reign. At the end of the second book of Gregory of Tours's *DLH* (2.27–43), Clovis's career is punctuated by a series of deceptively precise-looking quinquennial dates that are found in some manuscripts. He was born in 466/467; 481/482 marked his accession; 486/487 his defeat of Syagrius (5th regnal year); 491/492 his defeat of the Thuringians (10th regnal year); 496 his Alamannic victory and his baptism (15th regnal year); 500 his Burgundian campaign; 506/507 Franco-Visigothic War (25th regnal year); 511 his death. This may all look acceptable, but if one collates Gregory's claims about when Clovis died,¹⁵ one comes up with no fewer than three different dates: 509, 511, and 518. Further problems emerge when one compares other sources for

esset Orbe Princeps Catholicus; in Galliis plane divinitus novae lucis fulgidum sidus apparuit, quo universa Catholica Ecclesia deberet in infinita saecula illustrari.

12 Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* 361.

13 See C. K. Pullapilly, *Caesar Baronius, Counter-Reformation Historian* (Notre Dame IN, 1975), 67–69.

14 C. Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici denuo excusi et ad usque nostra tempora perducti ab Augusto Theiner. Tomus Octavus 449–499* (Bar-le-Duc, 1867), 8.593: *Quomodo autem Deus, qui de tenebris fecit splendescere lumen suum, ipse illuxit in corde Francorum regis ad illustrationem Catholicae fidei antiquior ceteris historicis Gregorius Turonensis ita narrat.*

15 E. James, *The Franks, Peoples of Europe* (Oxford/New York, 1988), 79: 5 years after Vouillé, 112 years after death of Saint Martin (397), 11th year of Licinus's of Tours episcopate, all based on W. Levison, "Zur Geschichte des Frankenkönigs Chlodowech," *Bonner Jahrbucher* 10 (1898): 47, who however calculates Licinus's episcopate as suggesting 521. Scholarly criticism of Gregory went back to Adrien de Valois, *Rerum Francicarum libri VIII* (Paris, 1646–58). G. Monod, *Études critiques sur les sources de l'histoire mérovingienne: Introduction—Grégoire de Tours—Marius d'Avenches*, Bibliothèque de l'école des hautes études 8 (Paris, 1872), 58–59.

confirmation of the dates of the different events in Clovis's life.¹⁶ As one scholar put it, "Whenever Gregory's dates for Clovis's reign can be checked by external sources, Gregory is wrong."¹⁷

In 1996, the 1,500th anniversary of the traditional date for the baptism of Clovis occasioned controversy in France. Even in a country with an official policy of *laïcité*, the Frankish king's conversion to Nicene Christianity was felt to be significant. Clovis was temporarily hot:¹⁸ Adam Gopnik covered the controversy in France surrounding the Pope's visit to Reims in the *New Yorker*; *Der Spiegel* spoke of a "Theological Soap Opera."¹⁹ A conference to celebrate the 1,500th anniversary of Clovis's baptism was held on 19–25 September, and its papers published.²⁰ When it became known that the Pope John Paul II had been invited to celebrate mass, controversy erupted. Who paid for his visit? Did it violate the principle of *laïcité*? Various right-wing elements such as Jean-Marie Le Pen seemed to be appropriating the figure of Clovis. Some saw anti-Christian sentiment. Some liberal British scholars boycotted the festivities. Was Clovis the French proto-Fascist who would purge his country of undesirable foreign elements? Or was he a Catholic king around whom nostalgic monarchists could rally? A flurry of publications on the late-5th-century Frankish king and on his reception showed that he was a veritable Arthur, *rex quondam rexque futurus*: a once and future king. And Clovis and Chlodwigian milestones still matter. Matthias Becher's recent book, for example, commemorates the 1,500th anniversary of the death of Clovis on 27 November 511.

The date of the baptism is important for interpreting Vouillé, for Alaric and the Visigoths were Arians. The majority of scholars still assume that Clovis's baptism took place in 496. This permits them to follow Gregory of Tours's depiction of the Vouillé campaign as a Nicene crusade against Arianism. Yet Clovis may not have been baptized in 496, but as much as a decade later in 508.²¹ Dates proposed range from 495 to 509.²² And if Clovis had not yet been

16 Long ago the author of the Maurist *Histoire littéraire de la France* (Paris, 1735), 3.392, claimed that his chronological errors only occur in the ancient history he narrates that was taken from other writers: "Et il est facile d'y remédier par d'autres monuments."

17 James, *Franks*, 79.

18 In the scholarly world too. The listings in the International Medieval Bibliography show that publications on him ballooned in 1997.

19 See A. Gopnik, "The First Frenchman," *New Yorker*, 7 October 1996, 44–53. For "Der Spiegel," see <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-8946901.html>.

20 Held at Reims "XVe Centenaire du Baptême de Clovis," organized by Michel Rouche in Reims on 19–25 September 1996. Now published as M. Rouche, ed., *Clovis, histoire et mémoire*, vol. 1: *Le baptême de Clovis, l'événement*; vol. 2: *Le baptême de Clovis, son écho à travers l'histoire* (Paris, 1997).

21 See especially W. Von den Steinen, "Chlodwigs Übergang zum Christentum: Eine quellenkritische Studie," *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Instituts für Geschichtsforschung* Ergänzungsband 12 (1933): 417–501; I. N. Wood, "Gregory of Tours and Clovis,"

baptized, the Gregorian crusade is called into question. Was it Gregory's own fabrication? Or was it perhaps authentic propaganda of Clovis's? Or something else? One needs to ask some very interesting, though perhaps unanswerable, questions about Clovis's religious affiliation and sympathies in 507. For before baptism was supposed to come a process of conversion and the catechumenate. At least one source from the 560s implies a delay in Clovis's conversion.²³

In 2007, the 1,500th anniversary of the Battle of Vouillé in 507 passed almost without commemoration. Only two academic celebrations of the Battle of Vouillé were held. One, on 28–30 September 2007, has already resulted in a volume in French.²⁴ The second was a conference held at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign on 21 April 2007. In spite of its title, *Wisigoths et Francs autour de la bataille de Vouillé (507)*, the volume resulting from the French conference did not contain a contribution about the Battle of Vouillé.²⁵ This volume based on the Illinois conference, however, will make good on its billing. It includes seven contributions deriving from papers presented at the conference, along with three additional contributions²⁶ to complete the picture. It aims to view the battle in the round from a variety of disciplinary perspectives and to shed light both on factual questions, such as where it actually took place and what may have caused it, but above all to illuminate its significance. Why did it matter?

The Political and Military Dimensions of the Battle of Vouillé

The first section of the book discusses the nut-and-bolts aspects of the battle itself, that is, the military and political circumstances leading up to the battle, the prosecution of the battle, and its immediate political fallout.

Ralph Mathisen first sets the stage for the Battle of Vouillé with an account of previous hostilities between the Visigoths and Franks commencing in or around 496 C.E. During the course of these campaigns, first the Franks and

Revue Belge de Philologie et d' Histoire 63 (1985): 249–72; A. Dierkens, "Die Taufe Chlodwigs," in *Die Franken Wegbereiter Europas: Vor 1500 Jahren, König Chlodwig und seine Erben* (Mainz, 1996), 1.183–91; D. R. Shanzer, "Dating the Baptism of Clovis: The Bishop of Vienne vs. the Bishop of Tours," *Early Medieval Europe* 7.1 (1998): 29–57.

22 See Becher, *Chlodwig I*, 17.

23 *Epist. Austras.* 8, p. 122 (MGH *Epist.* 3): *et cum esset homo astutissimus, noluit adquiescere, antequam vera agnosceret. Cum ista, quae supra dixi, probate cognovit, humilis ad domni Martini limina cecidit et baptizare se sine mora promisit.*

24 Bourgeois, *Wisigoths et Francs autour de la bataille de Vouillé (507)*.

25 Indeed, only one brief contribution, that of I. N. Wood, "Les Wisigoths et la question arienne," 19–22, even mentioned the battle more than just in passing.

26 Two by Mathisen and one by Wood.

then the Visigoths gained the upper hand. Eventually, the powerful Ostrogothic king Theoderic, who viewed himself as having a sort of western barbarian hegemony, attempted to step in and end the bad feeling between Alaric II and Clovis. But Clovis had other ideas, and in 507 he invaded the Visigothic kingdom in force.

Bernard Bachrach discusses the battle itself as a military historian from the perspective of whether it qualifies as a “decisive battle.” He points out that, although the Battles of Châlons (451) and of Poitiers (732) earned positions on canonical lists of decisive battles, Vouillé has not. Definitions of decisive battles vary, and criteria used by historians include whether the course of history would have been seriously different had a different party been victorious, and whether the battle was fought by choice, not chance. Military theorists, such as Clausewitz, focus instead on the strategy and intent of the commanders: was the battle fought to bring things to a head and to destroy the enemy? And although more modern military historians such as Verbruggen have brought this latter criterion to bear upon Vouillé, the battle has been on the whole downplayed; likewise the question about whether it was decisive. More importantly its strategic contours have not been delineated. Bachrach emphasizes the role of the Byzantine Empire and suggests that Clovis may have had Anastasius’s support. He finds it unlikely that Gundobad and the Burgundians were ever intended to fight at Vouillé. Instead they were supposed to deal with any eventual Ostrogothic relief force. Ancient commanders’ thought processes must be deduced from our analysis of their attested actions. Bachrach reconstructs the preliminary moves of the Franks and the Visigoths, including the levying of expeditionary and civilian troops. Clovis was active; Alaric reactive, his aim being to stop Clovis as far north as possible. Bachrach provides a rationalizing reading of Greg. *DLH* 2.37. The battle opened with arrows and spears; then the Visigothic cavalry attacked Clovis’s foot soldiers. Alaric did not as Gregory says, flee, but attempted a strategic feigned retreat. Ultimately he was routed. From Bachrach’s analysis Vouillé emerges as decisive according to several criteria, both as an intended, sought, staged battle and as an event that changed history.

In a second contribution dealing with the prosecution of the battle itself, we turn to the battle’s disputed location. *Ralph Mathisen* takes us on a historiographical tour of the many proposed sites for Clovis and Alaric’s battle of 507, narrowing down to the usual suspects, Vouillé and Voulon. He uses historical, topographical, linguistic, and military arguments to show that, from nearly every perspective, Voulon is a highly unlikely, if not impossible, site for the battle and that the battle of the Campus Vogladensis indeed took place at Vouillé.

Danuta Shanzer’s contribution investigates the battle by focusing on rereading a series of sources to correct and revise previous interpretations of them. In the process of doing so, she segues from a discussion of political/

military factors to a consideration of the role of religion. She aims to highlight their different generic emphases and rhetorical slants to show how Vouillé was “heard” in early medieval sources. She takes to heart Fried’s warnings about memory,²⁷ but tries to discern what kernels of fact can be rescued from what might seem to be hopelessly literary narrations. She starts with the descriptions of the Battle of Vouillé in Greg. *DLH* 2.37 and Fortunatus’s *De virtutibus Hilarii*. She then turns to the Burgundians, revisiting the letters exchanged between Avitus of Vienne and Sigismund of the Burgundians that relate to campaigns. Revising some of her own previous readings, she argues that Avitus’s *Epist.* 92 may be connected with the campaign of 507, and likewise that the famous phrase from *Epist.* 46, *vestra fides nostra victoria*, may refer to the Clovis’s conversion and the Franks’ and the Burgundians’ joint victory in 507. She thus argues for religious propaganda as part of the Visigothic campaign, despite advocating a later date for the baptism. She ends with some of the more suspect sources for events surrounding the Vouillé campaign, including the *Vita Sollemnis Carnoteni* and Fredegar. The former casts what may be Vouillé as Clovis’s conversion battle. The latter supports the diplomatic sources on financial, not religious causes for the war.

The immediate international consequences of the battle in Gaul are discussed by *Ralph Mathisen* in a detailed analysis of the ceremony at Tours in 508 in which Clovis received from the Byzantine emperor Anastasius the patriciate, the honorary consulate, and a golden crown. It is suggested that the Roman recognition of his role as a Roman client king resulting from his victory at Vouillé gave Clovis the political and personal capital that allowed him to incorporate the other Frankish peoples under his rule. As a result, he was able to create a Frankish kingdom that eventually would develop into the modern nation of France.

The political fallout of the battle from an external perspective follows. *Jonathan Arnold* turns to the Ostrogoths and presents a richly informed look at, and back at, Vouillé from Italy. Vouillé was eventually seen as the beginning of something new, namely France. But, as Arnold shows, to contemporaries in Italy its aftermath, the reconquest of Provence, heralded the empire *redux*. This empire, however, was Ostrogothic Italy under Theoderic. Italian sources presented Gaul as a province that had gone missing, as it were, and been barbarized. And, while political barbarization was understandable (needs must when the devil drives!), cultural barbarization was not. Italian views expressed in texts such as Ennodius’s *Epistles* of the culture of various Gallic individuals were not flattering. But Gallic youth could always leave Gaul for Italy to reclaim their *Romanitas*. While some of these reactions were rhetorical poses, there still

27 J. Fried, *Der Schleier der Erinnerung: Grundzüge einer historischen Memorik* (Munich, 2004), 334, 344.

remains a very real sense in which *barbaricum* was seen as moving south, its borders no longer being the Rhine, but the Alps. Franks, Burgundians, and Visigoths were all tarred with this discourse.

But caution required diplomacy, war avoided by other means, in the run-up to Vouillé, and that was what Theoderic used. Initially it worked, but not in 506–7. And 508 finally brought Theoderic's military reaction. Was it to be seen as an invasion of Gaul? Revenge for the defeat of fellow Goths? Reconquest? Or preemptive defense? All provide useful and not necessarily disjunctive alternative lenses. The Italian reaction to the reconquest of Provence was jubilation. In Gaul the reconquest was sold as liberation and restoration. Notable Romans such as Gemellus and Liberius were sent to oversee a process that included aid for Gaul. By 511, the year of Clovis's death, only four years after Vouillé, the consulship of the Gallo-Roman Felix (after a period of fifty years without Gallic consuls) signaled Italy's reclaiming of at least part of Alaric II's kingdom and the options open again for Gallo-Romans.

Religion Considerations Surrounding the Battle of Vouillé

In past historiography, the role of religion has loomed large in interpretations, both ancient and modern, of the Battle of Vouillé. Gregory of Tours painted Clovis's campaign as a virtual crusade against Arianism, and modern scholarship, too, has seen religion, and in particular Clovis's baptism as a Nicene Christian, as a major factor in the outcome of the battle. Several contributions, therefore, look at the role of religion from different angles regarding how it related to the workup, the process, and the results of the battle.

Ian Wood focuses on the conflict between Arian and Nicene Christianity, and in particular on the significance of the Frankish adoption of Nicene Christianity. He works from a late date for Clovis's baptism (508), while acknowledging that his conversion may have occurred in 506. It is clear that there was Arianism in Clovis's immediate surroundings: both Arian bishops and at least two siblings. Why, however is unclear. Scholars since Ensslin have suggested that the Arianism of Clovis's sister Audefleda was strategic, related to her marriage to Theoderic.²⁸ But this fails to explain Lentechildis's "lapse" into Arianism.²⁹ Was she too a princess who married an external Arian, perhaps in

28 W. Ensslin, *Theoderich der Grosse* (Munich, 1947), 94; e.g., recently M. Hartmann, "Gregor von Tours und arianische Königinnen oder hatte Chlodwig I. zwei oder drei Schwestern?" *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 116.1–2 (2008): 136; Becher, *Chlodwig I*, 175.

29 Attested by Avitus's lost *Sermo* 31 *de conversione Lenteildis Chlodovaei sororis*. See MGH AA 6.2, p. 152 Peiper. Also Greg. *DLH* 2.31. The third sister, Albofledis, who was

the Burgundian kingdom? Or was Arianism simply an available option at Clovis's court, suppressed by Gregory of Tours? And if Clovis either hosted Arians in his court and permitted the evangelization of his sisters, how can these facts be reconciled with Gregory of Tours's presentation of the Vouillé campaign as a crusade against Arianism? While historiographic texts like Gregory of Tours could be pious fabrications, Clovis's letter to the Aquitainian bishops that guaranteed protection for Catholics in the Vouillé campaign cannot. So he could indeed have been officially converted by 507. But this leaves the problem of the alliance with the Arian Burgundians and of the possible Burgundian participation in Vouillé attested only by Isidore. Ultimately it is impossible to tell whether Sigismund and the Burgundians were there. But they were certainly at Toulouse and Narbonne, and the Burgundians suffered reprisals from Theoderic.

Wood also analyzes the complicated religious politics of the Burgundian kingdom. Gundobad was pro-Catholic, even if he did not convert. All the known women of the royal family were Catholics. Sigismund had converted by 501/502, well before 507. This leaves the Arian followers of Gundobad, whom Wood sees as the core, if not a majority in the kingdom, possibly even former members of Ricimer's bodyguard. Wood adverts to possible economic causes of the war and sees Clovis's "crusade" as propaganda, possibly even contemporary propaganda for the Catholic Gallo-Romans of Aquitaine. Clovis could thus emerge as a cunning propagandist to match his portrayal as the deceiver who sheds crocodile tears in Greg. *DLH* 2.42 fin. The Visigothic kingdom had had its own Arian-Catholic tensions, even though Agde represented détente before Vouillé; likewise the *Breviarium* of Alaric. But Catholics fought for Alaric at Vouillé, including Sidonius's son Apollinaris. Avitus's correspondence with him says nothing of religion, but concentrates on Apollinaris's release from a charge of treason and the family's relief. There were thus no simple divisions between Catholic and heretic. Clovis seems to have presented himself as a Catholic. But this does not seem to have won over the Aquitainian aristocrats—if they were aware of it. But the late dating of Clovis's conversion suggests that he recreated the Franks as a Catholic nation in the years 506–11 with the Visigothic campaign, his own baptism, and the Council of Orléans.

Gregory Halfond guides us through reading yet a different type of text reflecting an event, the Council of Orléans of 511, that followed on the heels of the Battle of Vouillé. Starting from Alaric II's council at Agde in 506, Halfond outlines a competitive ecclesiastical-political program of Clovis's: Alaric had

baptized with Clovis could have started as a pagan or an unbaptized Arian catechumen. Hartmann, "Gregor von Tours," makes many excellent arguments about Clovis's three sisters, but seems to exclude the possibility that Audefreda's Arianism could have been homegrown and not brought back to Lentechildis after Audefreda's marriage to Theoderic by a pro-Gothic party at court.

planned a synod at Toulouse in 507 that would never take place. When Clovis convoked the Council of Orléans in 511 he has been seen as a new Constantine. But it is far more likely that he was taking his lead from Alaric. Unlike his Visigothic model, as a baptized Nicene he could actually set an agenda for his Nicene bishops. And in the wake of Vouillé the reintegration of the formerly Visigothic bishoprics and bishops was important ecclesiastic politics. Clovis needed to amalgamate the bishops of the new and expanded Frankish kingdom and make them work together.

The relationship between Vouillé and Orléans is an old question, but, since Daly in 1994 staunchly denied a connection, Halfond's treatment is overdue. He begins with the "who?"—carefully dissecting the credentials and sees of the invitees to Orléans. Some sees represented at Agde were not at Orléans, and it is likely that the Ostrogothic military presence stood in the way. Plotting the sees on a map reveals that the southernmost latitudinal line (east-west) corresponds to the limits of Frankish military control of southern Gaul. The newly annexed bishops of northwestern Gaul were there in force, while those from east of Paris were not. While trouble with the Alamanni might explain absences from the northeast, Halfond sees instead an exclusion of better acculturated Frankish bishops.³⁰ Clovis may have encouraged bishops from sees new to his rule more than old trusties, and the episcopal subscriptions support this interpretation. Why? Orléans allowed Alaric to unify the new north and the conquered south. Halfond provocatively suggests that Clovis omitted his old guard because they knew him too well from his previous incarnations as a pagan or Arian (or both)!

Turning to the "where?" Halfond shows that location and convenience mattered as least as much as size or prestige. Yet Orléans stood beyond the traditional boundaries of Gallic councils. By holding his council of 511 there Clovis could send a clear message that the Frankish church was not going to be purely southern. But, as a unifying compromise, a southern bishop, Cyprian of Bordeaux, presided.³¹ Halfond illuminatingly compares the venue of Orléans 511 to the choice of Washington DC as capital of the American republic. The extent of Clovis's influence on the council has been debated, but Halfond sees no reason to limit it to the first ten canons. From the time of his accession Clovis had been urged by Remigius of Reims to work with bishops. And he was in correspondence with at least one Burgundian bishop, Avitus of Vienne, at the time of his baptism. He saw himself as actively engaged with the church and its politics in a positive paternal relationship. The canons of Orléans deal with

30 Becher, *Chlodwig I*, 250, 273, now raises the possibility that, since this part of the kingdom would soon fall to his son Theuderic, Clovis may have ceded control to him before his death.

31 See now Becher, *Chlodwig I*, 248–49, for possible contacts between Clovis and Cyprian during the Siege of Bordeaux in winter 507/508.

issues raised by Clovis's recent victories—but largely implicitly, leaving Vouillé as important background. The Council of Orléans repays such a geographical, military, and political reading. It initiated the new Frankish church, founded on a Gallo-Roman substrate, but enabled only by a major military victory.

The contribution of *Deborah Deliyannis* returns to the Italian connection and is linked both to the question of Arian and Nicene Christianity and to the reception of the Battle of Vouillé in Italy, in this case Ravenna. The church (originally Theoderic's) now known as Sant' Apollinare Nuovo is attested as dedicated to S. Martin in the late 6th century, and its late-6th-century mosaic of the saint leading the martyrs still survives. Her initial evidence is thus art historical. Martin in the mosaic in Sant'Apollinare Nuovo has been explained by scholars who work on Ravenna as an anti-Arian saint. But Martin's *fortuna* as a combatant of Arianism has been questioned. McKinley dates his anti-Arian reputation to the 580s or 590s, too late to explain his presence in Ravenna already under Bishop Agnellus in 557/570. Deliyannis draws a distinction between Martin's role in Sulpicius Severus as one who suffered at Arian hands to his role in Gregory of Tours as their adversary. By the 560s in Nicetius of Trier's letter to Clodswinda we find Martin's healing miracles favorably compared to those of Arian saints in the vicinity of an allusion to Clovis's military successes against Gundobad and Alaric. While Gregory in the 590s is the first to link Martin explicitly with Vouillé, he is unlikely to have invented the connection. The kernel seems to have been in place by the 560s.

Turning to Italy Deliyannis suggests that the Martin hymned by Ennodius under Theoderic cannot have been perceived as anti-Arian and notes that in the early 570s Fortunatus did not know of the rededication, even though he had initially visited in 566. This suggests that the rededication and mosaic date to after 566. Martin spread to Italy as an ascetic. But, as a result of Vouillé and Clovis, he began to be seen as an anti-Arian saint by the 560s. The rededication to Martin of what had formerly been Theoderic's church may reflect the saint's role at Vouillé. There were always questions about what to do with churches that had been Arian or had been used by Arians and how to "cleanse" them.³² In this case, part of the purge consisted of a dedication to a Gallic saint who, as a result of propaganda connected with Vouillé, had earned a reputation as an antiheretical patron. At the time the church was rededicated, opposition to Arianism had again become topical under the threat of the Lombards. The dedication of the Byzantine exarch's church to Martin may have been an homage to the preferred orthodoxy of the Franks.

32 See D. R. Shanzer and I. N. Wood, *Avitus of Vienne: Selected Letters and Prose*, TTH 38 (Liverpool, 2002), 295–302.

The Material Remains

The Visigoths were in Aquitaine for almost a century, but paradoxically seem to have left no archeological trace of their presence. Because archeologists conveniently used to assume that peoples could be linked to distinctive material cultures, they have always felt the pressure to try to make mute artifacts speak and to flesh out dry bones with the contours of the living human being. *Bailey Young* takes us through the vicissitudes of archeological attempts to recover the seemingly invisible Visigoths from their archeological record. Barrière-Flavy saw them in Francia wearing their Crimean national costume. But the very material evidence he used would eventually be shown to be derived from Frankish and Roman prototypes. Defining Visigothic material culture has consistently proved difficult. Weapons and pottery were rare. Pottery found in Visigothic graves could be shown to be late Roman. Only a rectangular plate-buckle remained. Edward James in 1977 showed that only materials from Septimanian and Spanish graves could be considered Visigothic ornaments. In the meantime Kazanski's research on Černiakhov culture has shown that features once thought Visigothic were actually Danubian. The barbarians that came to Francia did not bring one distinctive funerary culture, but several—and those confusingly shared with Romans and others. In short, male Visigoths, at least in death, seemed to have wished to appear Roman.

Women, however, seem to be different. Bierbrauer suggested that distinctive female graves, featuring paired fibulae on both shoulders and found throughout Francia, were those of Visigothic women related to splinter groups of Visigoths that Bierbrauer saw as having left Spain for Francia while Clovis was consolidating his power against the Visigoths. But a team from MAN under Périn and Kazanski has now revised Bierbrauer's thesis to see in these graves the wives of late-5th-century east Germanic warriors, whose graves were ethnically marked and drew on Danubian material culture as a koine. According to them the imitation went from Francia to Spain, not vice versa, and they dated some of the Bierbrauer graves earlier than 480. By the time of Vouillé the military élite were adapting a Frankish style that included dressed burial, and, just as the Visigoths were being expelled, they may have imitated their Frankish foes in this too.

This volume thus provides a thorough look at the causes, prosecution, and consequences of the Battle of Vouillé. In the process, it establishes the place of the battle as one of the most pivotal battles of history, a battle that, unlike many "great battles," had lasting and significant consequences for the future course of history.

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The Battle of Vouillé

Tale of the Tape of the Two Combatants

Name	Alaric II	Clovis
Nationality	Visigoth	Frank
Father	Euric (466–484)	Childeric (ca. 456/463–81)
Birth year	ca. 460	466
Accession	484	481
Death	507 (in battle)	511 (natural causes)
Age in 507	ca. 47	41
Rank	King, Visigothic kingdom of Toulouse	King of the Salian Franks
Signet ring		
Legend	<i>ALARICVS REX GOTHORVM</i>	<i>CHILDIRICI REGIS</i> (signet ring of Clovis's father Childeric)
Siblings	none known	Audefleda, Albofledis, Lantechildis
Wife	Theodegotha, Ostrogoth, daughter of Theoderic	Chrotchildis, Burgundian, daughter of Chilperic
Children	Amalaric, Gesalic (illegitimate)	Theoderic (illegitimate), Ingomeres, Chlodomer, Childebert, Chlothachar
Territory	Roman provinces of Aquitania I–II north to the Loire, Novempopulana, Narbonensis I, southwestern Viennensis; Spain	Roman provinces of Belgica I–II, much of Lugdunensis II–IV south to the Loire, Thuringia

Capital city	Toulouse	Tournai
Religion	Arian Christian	Nicene Christian or pagan
Law code	<i>Breviarium Alarici</i>	<i>Lex Salica</i>
Church council	Agde (506) (Nicene)	Orléans (511) (Nicene)
Army	Visigothic army, Gallo-Roman levies	Frankish army, Burgundian allies



Frankish and Visigothic kingdoms on the eve of the Battle of Vouillé in 507.
Source: http://duguesclin.free.fr/merovingien/enluminure/Clovis_Carte_500.jpg.

The Political and Military Dimension

The First Franco-Visigothic War and the Prelude to the Battle of Vouillé

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During the course of the 5th century, Roman Gaul came to be partitioned among several barbarian peoples: the Franks in the north, the Visigoths in Aquitania and Spain, and the Burgundians in the Rhone valley. During the reign of King Euric (466–84), it appeared that the Visigoths were on their way to becoming the preeminent barbarian power in western Europe.¹ But Euric's son and successor, Alaric II,² was faced by an increasing threat from the north posed by Clovis, an ambitious Frankish king who defeated the Roman warlord Syagrius in 486.³ According to Gregory of Tours, the defeated Syagrius had taken refuge with Alaric, and Clovis threatened to attack if Alaric refused to turn over Syagrius. Alaric, demonstrating what Gregory of Tours called "customary Gothic cowardice," complied.⁴ And Gregory's view often has been retailed in modern historiography: Herwig Wolfram, for example, notes a widespread belief that Euric's "incompetent successor Alaric gambled away the kingdom."⁵

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- 1 See, e.g., R. W. Mathisen and Hagith Sivan, "Forging a New Identity: The Kingdom of Toulouse and the Frontiers of Visigothic Aquitania," in *The Visigoths: Studies in Culture and Society*, ed. A. Ferreiro (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 1–62; H. Sivan, "Sidonius Apollinaris, Theodoric II, and Gothic-Roman Politics from Avitus to Anthemius," *Hermes* 117 (1989): 85–94; E. A. Thompson, "The Visigoths from Fritigern to Euric," *Historia* 12 (1963): 105–26; and K. F. Stroheker, *Eurich, König der Westgoten* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1937).
 - 2 See, inter alios, Francoise Vallet, *De Clovis a Dagobert: Les merovingiens* (Evreux, 1995), 37.
 - 3 See, e.g., Penny MacGeorge, *Late Roman Warlords* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 111–36; Edward James, "Childéric, Syagrius et la disparition du royaume de Soissons," *Revue archéologique de Picardie* 3–4 (1988): 9–12.
 - 4 Greg. *Hist.* 2.27: *Chlodovechus vero ad Alarico mittit, ut eum redderet, alioquin noveret, sibi bellum ob eius retentionem inferred. at ille metuens, . . . ut Gothorum pavere mos est, vinctum legatis tradidit*; see also Fredegar, *Chron.* 3.15; LHF 9. H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, trans. T. J. Dunlap (Berkeley, 1988), 191, suggests that Syagrius might not have been handed over immediately. For Visigothic fears of the Franks after ca. 493, see Procop. *BG* 1.12.21.
 - 5 Wolfram, *Goths*, 243.

But an objective consideration of the evidence suggests that Alaric, even if not up to the standards of his father, did the best he could with what he had.

Clovis, meanwhile, began to forge the disunited Franks into a united kingdom,⁶ and soon thereafter, Visigothic Aquitania appeared on his menu.⁷ The later 490s saw a series of poorly attested Frankish attacks upon Aquitania,⁸ which might have been encouraged when the Visigoths became distracted by stepped-up immigration into Spain.⁹ Clovis's strategic position also may have been strengthened by an alliance with the Christian *Arborychi* ("Armoricans"?) living in Lugdunensis III, modern Brittany, northwest of Tours.¹⁰ This would have given him improved access to the Visigothic kingdom south of the Loire.

Beginning in the mid-490s, Clovis made several strikes at Visigothic Aquitania. A continuation of Prosper's chronicle notes under the year 496, "Alaric, in the twelfth year of his reign, captured Saintes."¹¹ Such a statement, of course, presupposes that someone, generally supposed to have been the Franks,¹² had previously captured the city. The Visigothic ability to retake Saintes in 496 might have improved when Clovis was forced to confront the Alamanni in the same year.¹³ The recapture of Saintes by the Visigoths in 496 did not, however, mark the end of Frankish attacks, for the same chronicle notes, under the year 498, "In the fourteenth year of Alaric the Franks captured Bordeaux and transferred it from the authority of the Goths into their own possession, having taken captive the Gothic duke Suatrius."¹⁴

It probably was in the context of these Frankish campaigns in Aquitania in the later 490s that several other undated events also took place. In a letter from the 560s written to Queen Chlodosuinda of the Lombards, Bishop Nicetius of Trier claimed that at some time prior to his intervention in the Burgundian civil

6 See, e.g., E. James, *The Franks* (London, 1988), 79–91; and I. N. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751* (London, 1994), 41–49.

7 E.g., T. Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders* (London, 1888), 3.392n1; B. S. Bachrach, "Procopius and the Chronology of Clovis's Reign," *Viator* 1 (1970): 21–31; Wolfram, *Goths*, 191; James, *Franks*, 86; and R. W. Mathisen, *Ruricius of Limoges and Friends: A Collection of Letters from Visigothic Aquitania* (Liverpool, 1999).

8 E.g., Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders*, 3.392n1; Bachrach, "Procopius"; Wolfram, *Goths*, 191; James, *Franks*, 86; and Matthias Becher, *Chlodwig I: Der Aufstieg der Merowinger und das Ende der antiken Welt* (Munich: Beck, 2011), 204–7.

9 As Wolfram, *Goths*, 19; see, e.g., the so-called Chronicle of Saragossa: MGH AA 11.221–22.

10 Procop. *Bell.* 1.12.13; see Bachrach, "Procopius."

11 *Auct. prosp. haun* (MGH AA 9.323): *Alaricus anno XII regni sui Santones obtinuit.*

12 As assumed by, e.g., Wolfram, *Goths*, 191; James, *Franks*, 86; Becher, *Chlodwig I*, 205.

13 Greg. *Hist.* 2.30; see Mathisen and Sivan, "Kingdom of Toulouse," 52; and for similar Becher, *Chlodwig I*, 205–6.

14 *Chron. Sarag.* (MGH AA 11.323): *Ann. XIII Alarici Franci Burdigalam obtinuerunt et a potestate Gothorum in possessionem sui redegerunt capto Suatrio Gothorum duce.*

war of 500, Clovis, after hearing of miracles done at the tomb of Martin, “humbly fell at the doorstep of the lord Martin and promised to be baptized without delay.”¹⁵ In addition, if there is any truth at all to this tale, it must be dated to before Clovis’s baptism.¹⁶ Prior to 507, Tours supposedly was in Visigothic territory, albeit in a very exposed position, situated right on the border between the two kingdoms. So what was Clovis doing there before 500? One possibility might be that Clovis actually captured the city, perhaps during either the Saintes or Bordeaux campaigns: there was only one major stop, Poitiers, on the road from Tours to Saintes and Bordeaux.¹⁷ It also may be at this time that Ruricius of Limoges wrote to Aeonius of Arles (ca. 490–502) (*Epist.* 2.8) on behalf of the priest Possessor, whose brother had been taken captive *ab hostibus* in the area of Angers, situated on the Loire between Tours and Nantes.

But the Visigoths eventually repelled the Frankish attacks: as already noted, the Franks were expelled from Saintes. In addition, Gregory of Tours reports that under Clovis, the Franks besieged Nantes, at the mouth of the Loire, for sixty days or more but eventually were put to flight, supposedly by an apparition of Saint Similinus, and the Frankish commander Chilo was so overwhelmed that he converted to Christianity.¹⁸ The Visigoths also regained possession of Tours, as seen by the exiles of bishops Volusianus and Verus in the early 6th century.¹⁹ And it would appear that the Visigoths likewise soon regained control of Bordeaux; they certainly controlled the city when Caesarius of Arles was exiled there in 505.²⁰ Indeed, the attack on that city would seem to have been nothing more than a raid, for the Franks could not possibly hope to have held a city so deep in Visigothic territory.²¹ The first Frankish offensive against Aquitania thus ended in complete failure.²²

Nevertheless, ill will between the Visigoths and Franks continued. In the midst of a Burgundian civil war in 500, in which Clovis, ultimately

15 *Epist. aust.* 8 (MGH *Epist.* 3.121–22): *Humilis ad domni Martini limina cecidit et baptizare se sine mora promisit, qui baptizatus quanta in hereticos Alaricum vel Gundobadum regum fecerit.*

16 For a suggested date of 507/511 for Clovis’s baptism as opposed to the traditional date of ca. 496, see D. R. Shanzer, “Dating the Baptism of Clovis: The Bishop of Vienne vs. the Bishop of Tours,” *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998): 29–57.

17 L. Pietri, *La Ville de Tours de IV^e au VI^e siècle* (Rome, 1983), 133, suggests the Franks held the city 494–96; note also James, *Franks*, 86; Lippold, “Chlodovechus,” *RE* suppl 13 (1973): 155.

18 Greg. *Glor. mart.* 60.

19 Greg. *Hist.* 2.26, 29; 10.31.

20 *Vita Caesarii* 1.21; Ruricius of Limoges, *Epist.* 2.33.

21 For contra, see Becher, *Chlodwig I*, 206: “kein einfacher Plünderungszug.”

22 Seconded by Becher, *Chlodwig I*, 215: “Alarich II. konnte sich also als Sieger . . . fühlen.”

unsuccessfully, intervened on the side of the Burgundian king Godegisel,²³ Gundobad sent some Frankish captives “in exile, to Toulouse, to King Alaric.”²⁴ After Gundobad’s ultimate victory, the Visigoths even gained control over Avignon for their troubles.²⁵

Just after 500, Alaric and Clovis met at Ambiacum (modern Amboise) in the middle of the Loire River and restored direct diplomatic relations.²⁶ Gregory of Tours reports,

Alaric, king of the Goths, when he saw King Clovis unrelentingly defeating various nations, sent ambassadors to him, saying, “If my brother wishes, he might decide that, with God’s blessing, we should meet.” Clovis did not reject this suggestion and came to him. And meeting on an island of the Loire, which was next to the village of Amboise in the territory of Tours, they ate and drank together, and having promised friendship to each other, they departed in peace.²⁷

Alaric presumably returned his Frankish “guests” and was probably happy to be rid of them. For his part, Clovis would have evacuated any Visigothic territory he still held. It might have seemed that if anything, Alaric was left with the upper hand: he had been able to counteract any previous Frankish offensives, and it had been he who had invited Clovis to the conference.

But not for long. Clovis continued to have designs on Aquitania. Gregory of Tours reports that “at that time, many Gauls wished with the greatest desire to have the Franks as masters.”²⁸ In 506, Alaric attempted to conciliate the Gallo-Romans in his own kingdom by permitting the publication of the *Breviarium Alarici* (also known as the *Lex Romana Visigothorum*), a compilation of past Roman law,²⁹ and the assembly at Agde of the first Nicene church council ever held in the Visigothic kingdom.³⁰

23 Greg. *Hist.* 2.32; for date, Mar. Avent. *Chron.* s.a. 500: MGH AA 11.234.

24 Greg. *Hist.* 2.33: *Tolosae in exilium ad Alaricum regem.*

25 As indicated by the attendance of the bishop of Avignon at the Visigothic Council of Agde in 506.

26 See Mathisen and Sivan, “Kingdom of Toulouse,” 56–57; also Becher, *Chlodwig I*, 215.

27 Greg. *Hist.* 2.35: *Igitur Alaricus rex Gothorum, cum videret Chlodovechum regem gentes assidue debellare, legatos ad eum dirigit, dicens, “si frater meus velit, insederat animo, ut nos Deo propitio pariter viderimus.” quod Chlodovechus non respuens, ad eum venit. coniunctique in insula Ligeris, quae erat iuxta vicum Ambaciensem territorium urbis Turonicae, simul locuti, comedentes pariter ac bibentes, promissa sibi amicitia, pacifici discesserunt.* For a date of 502, see Wolfram, *Goths*, 192; Gregory merely places the meeting between Gundobad’s victory in 500 and Clovis’s invasion of Aquitania in 507.

28 Greg. *Hist.* 2.35: *Multi iam tunc ex Galliis habere Francos dominos summo desiderio cupiebant.*

29 For the text, see Theodor Mommsen, Paul Meyer, and Paul Krüger, eds., *Theodosiani libri XVI (CTh)* (Berlin, 1905), 1.cccvii ff.; and note also Franz Beyerle, “Zur Frühgeschichte der westgotischen Gesetzgebung,” *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte: Germanistische Abteilung* 80 (1950): 1–33; Renzo Lambertini, *La*

At the same time, moreover, the ambitious Ostrogothic king Theoderic, was casting his diplomatic net as widely as possible using marriage alliances. He himself married Audefleda (*PLRE* 2.185), a sister of Clovis; his sister Amalafrida (*PLRE* 2.63) was married to the Vandal king Thrasamund; one daughter, Ostrogotho Areagni (*PLRE* 2.138–9), married the Burgundian prince, later king, Sigismund; and another, Theodegotha (*PLRE* 2.1068), married Alaric II; and his niece Amalaberga (*PLRE* 2.549–50) married King Hermanfridus of the Thuringians. In early 507, Theoderic undertook to fish in the troubled waters of Gaul by posing as a peacemaker in individual letters to Clovis, Alaric, and Gundobad and a joint letter to the kings of the Heruls, Warni, and Thuringians.³¹ To Alaric, for example, Theoderic suggested, “Because the hearts of your ferocious peoples are made soft by long peace, beware suddenly sending into danger those whom it is known do not have sufficient experience in such portentous times.”³² Theoderic advised prudence: “Therefore, restrain yourself until I can send my ambassadors to the king of the Franks, so that the judgment of your friends may dissolve your quarrel.”³³ But it was Clovis whom Theoderic blamed for aggression against the Goths. He advised the Germanic kings to send ambassadors advising Clovis “either to

codificazione di Alarico II (Turin: Giappichelli, 1991); John Matthews, “Interpreting the *Interpretationes* of the *Breviarium*,” in *Law, Society, and Authority in Late Antiquity*, ed. R. W. Mathisen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 16–17; and R. W. Mathisen, “D’Aire-sur-l’Adour à Agde: Les relations entre la loi séculaire et la loi canonique au fin du royaume de Toulouse,” in *Le Breviare d’Alaric*, ed. M. Rouche and B. Dumézil (PUPS, 2008), 41–52.

- 30 Text: CCSL 148.111–30; see also, e.g., William Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 85. For Euric’s hostilities toward the Nicene church, see Marie-Bernadette Bruguière, *Littérature et droit dans la Gaule du Ve Siècle* (Paris: Presses universitaires, 1974), 259–60; and Élie Griffe, *La Gaule chrétienne à l’époque romaine* (Paris: Letouzey, 1964–65), 2.82–93; for a possible council held at Arles ca. 500, also with the tacit approval of Alaric, see R. W. Mathisen, “The ‘Second Council of Arles’ and the Spirit of Compilation and Codification in Late Roman Gaul,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 5 (1997): 511–54; and for the possibility that the “Code of Euric” actually was issued under Alaric, see Wolfram, *Goths*, 195–96; and Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*, 95.
- 31 Cass. *Variae* 3.1–4; see Arnold’s essay in this volume for discussion; also D. R. Shanzer, “Two Clocks and a Wedding: Theoderic’s Diplomatic Relations with the Burgundians,” *Romanobarbarica* 14 (1996–97): 225–58; and B. Saitta, “Teoderico di fronte a Franchi e Visigoti (a proposito della battaglia di Vouillé),” in *Cultura e società nell’Italia medievale: Studi per Paolo Brezzi* (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 1988), 748–53.
- 32 Cass. *Variae* 3.1.1: *Quia populorum ferocium corda longa pace mollescunt, cavete subito in aleam mittere quos constat tantis temporibus exercitia non habere.*
- 33 Cass. *Variae* 3.1.3: *Quapropter sustinete, donec ad Francorum regem legatos nostros dirigere debeamus, ut litem vestram amicorum debeant amputare iudicia.*

restrain himself, in consideration of equity, from an attack on the Visigoths and to abide by the laws of nations, or he himself, who believed that the opinion of such great men should be disregarded, would suffer an attack by all them.”³⁴ And in a letter to Clovis himself, Theoderic threatened retaliation if he did not yield to arbitration: “Throw down your sword. . . . He who believes that these warnings should be condemned will suffer us and our friends as enemies.”³⁵

But all for nought. Later in 507, the continuing hostilities culminated in a second, more successful, Frankish invasion of Visigothic Aquitania. And this campaign and issues surrounding it forms the subject of this volume.

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34 Cass. *Variae* 1.3.2: *Ut aut se de Wisigotharum conflictu considerata aequitate suspendat et leges gentium quaerat aut omnium patiaturs incursum, qui tantorum arbitrium iudicat esse temnendum.*

35 Cass. *Variae* 3.4.3–4: *Abicite ferrum . . . ille nos et amicos nostros patietur adversos qui talia monita . . . crediderit esse temnenda.*

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Vouillé and the Decisive Battle Phenomenon in Late Antique Gaul

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The idea of “decisive battle” is a well-established concept among both military professionals and academics. Numerous scholarly studies and a great many popular books have focused on the identification of particular battles throughout history as decisive. These efforts generally include examples from the medieval west.¹ However, as with many other historical concepts, proper definitions, that is, definitions that meet the epistemological criteria of both necessity and sufficiency, are simply not to be found in historical works dealing with the decisive-battle phenomenon.² Therefore, it is not surprising that there is little specific agreement regarding what characteristics make a battle decisive and, as a result, which battles are, in fact, to be considered decisive by modern scholars and their audiences.

Decisive Late Antique Battles in Gaul

Despite a lack of epistemologically valid criteria, two battles of the late antique and early medieval era, Châlons in 451 and Poitiers (sometimes referred to as the Battle of Tours) in 732, are found on many lists. For example, Sir Edward Creasy, writing in 1851, identifies the victories by Aëtius and Charles Martel as two of the fifteen decisive battles on a worldwide basis from Marathon to Waterloo in 1815.³ J. F. C. Fuller also recognizes Châlons and Poitiers among the world’s decisive battles.⁴ By contrast, however, Fletcher Pratt includes neither of these battles among the sixteen that he chose to study as “battles that changed

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- 1 See, e.g., Joseph Dhamus, *Seven Decisive Battles of the Middle Ages* (Chicago, 1983).
 - 2 The problem of developing proper definitions for historical analysis is addressed in two studies by B. S. Bachrach, “Charlemagne and the Carolingian General Staff,” *Journal of Military History* 66 (2002): 313–15; and *Early Carolingian Warfare: Prelude to Empire* (Philadelphia, 2001), 1–2, with the scholarly literature cited.
 - 3 Edward Creasy, *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World: From Marathon to Waterloo*, new ed. (New York/London, 1900), 143–209.
 - 4 J. F. C. Fuller, *Decisive Battles: Their Influence upon History and Civilisation* (London, 1931), 1.130–50, 161–73, 176–202.

history.”⁵ More recently, Joseph Dhamus, the only medievalist in this group, includes Châlons but omits Poitiers.⁶ Although many more works could be cited, I conclude this brief review by taking note of a recent world military history in which 175 battles are listed in the index. Both Châlons and Poitiers are included.⁷ None of the above-cited works, however, chooses to identify the victory won by the Merovingian king Clovis over the Visigothic monarch Alaric II at Vouillé in 507 as worth mentioning, much less to classify it either as a decisive battle or a battle that changed history.⁸

Criteria For Decisiveness: Châlons and Poitiers

Although, as noted above, there is nothing resembling an epistemologically sound definition for a decisive battle among these list makers, they do try, more or less, to justify their choices. Of special interest here are the observations of Pratt, who not only fails to include Châlons and Poitiers, but also omits the Battle of Hastings. Pratt avers that “one of the striking features of Western European culture has been its ability to achieve decisive results by military means.”⁹ Thus, Pratt identifies two primary criteria for a decisive battle. First, “the war in which the battle took place must itself have decided something, must really mark one of those turning points after which things would have been a good deal different if the decision had gone in the other direction.”¹⁰ Second, the battle must “represent a positive decision.” He argues, for example, that Creasy’s choice of Châlons and Tours does not fit these criteria because they “were both preventative decisions.” He continues that the “special genius of Western European culture when it takes up arms is for really changing the course of history in battle, not merely arresting a movement, but completely altering its direction.”¹¹

Fuller, who includes both Châlons and Poitiers on his list, sees war and peace as “conflicts of ideas and values and not merely struggles between men.” He glosses this point by discussing decisiveness in terms of “ideas which are

5 Fletcher Pratt, *Battles That Changed History* (New York, 1956).

6 Dhamus, *Seven Decisive Battles*, 17–54, 81–108.

7 Christian I. Archer, John R. Ferris, Holger H. Herwig, and Timothy H. E. Travers, *World History of Warfare* (Lincoln NE, 2002), 107–9, 127.

8 George Bruce, *Harbottle’s Dictionary of Battles*, 3rd ed. (New York, 1981), 63, 255, treats the victories by Aëtius and Charles Martel. However, at 201, 270, Vouillé is mentioned and considered a decisive victory. Unfortunately, the author gets some of the key facts wrong.

9 Pratt, *Battles That Changed History*, 11.

10 Ibid., 12.

11 Ibid.

going to live and ideas that, growing senile, are going to die.” It is in this context that he accepts Thomas Hodgkin’s view that the Battle of Châlons “decided that Europe was to belong to the German and the Roman, not to the Tartar race.”¹² Yet, Fuller also recognizes that Attila and the remnants of his army were permitted to escape after being defeated. He argues that Aëtius concluded that the Huns “should not be decisively defeated.”¹³ He continues in this vein and observes that Châlons “in itself ... was not a decisive engagement, for it was fought when the Huns were in full retreat.” Thus, at the tactical and perhaps even at the strategic level, Fuller would seem to agree with Gibbon, who observed regarding the effects of the Battle of Châlons: “Neither the spirit nor the forces nor the reputation of Attila were impaired by the failure of the Gallic expedition.”¹⁴

Like Fuller, Creasy seems to eschew the notion of “decisive battle” with regard to Châlons. He avers, “Aëtius was unwilling to be too victorious.” He claims that Aëtius permitted Attila to escape with the defeated remnant of his army because he feared that if the Huns were destroyed, the Visigoths could become too powerful. It is assumed that Aëtius expected once again to be able to use Hunnic auxiliaries to strengthen his forces as he had during previous decades. The importance of Aëtius’s victory, according to Creasy, rests on the view that Attila never again imperiled the civilized world as he had menaced it before his defeat at Châlons.¹⁵ Contrary to Gibbon, Creasy implies that the failure of Attila’s invasion of Italy was a result of his defeat at Châlons and not of the specific situation as it evolved in the malarial swamps north of Rome during summer 452.¹⁶

Dhamus, echoing both Gibbon and Fuller, concludes that the Battle of Châlons saw “no clear cut victory.”¹⁷ He follows Creasy and those who believe that Aëtius permitted Attila to escape with what was left of his army because he feared that if the Huns were destroyed, the Visigoths could become too strong. As noted above, it is assumed that Aëtius expected once again to be able to use Hunnic auxiliaries as he had earlier in his career. Dhamus makes clear that he believes there was no decisive winner on the field of battle at Châlons. He concluded, nevertheless, that it must be considered a decisive battle. This is because it proved to the western Roman Empire and to the Germans that the

12 Fuller, *Decisive Battles*, 1.144; and Thomas Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders* (Oxford, 1880–99), 2.159, for the quotation.

13 Fuller, *Decisive Battles*, 1.144.

14 Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. J. B. Bury (London, 1896–1900), 3.467.

15 Creasy, *Fifteen Decisive Battles*, 156–57.

16 *Ibid.*, 157.

17 Dhamus, *Seven Decisive Battles*, 51.

Huns could be defeated. In short, Aëtius's victory "hurried to its end the existence of the most ruthless barbarian invader Europe had ever suffered."¹⁸

Poitiers

While Dhamus rejects Poitiers as worthy of inclusion among the seven decisive battles of the Middle Ages, he does, however, credit Charles Martel with "blunting Islamic expansion" and considers this encounter "the only great battle fought during the Merovingian period."¹⁹ Thus, by inference, Dhamus makes clear that Clovis's victory at Vouillé does not compare favorably on some unexplained calculus of greatness with Charles Martel's victory at Poitiers. Fuller, who considers Poitiers a decisive battle, makes claims that are far more sweeping than those of Dhamus. He argues that the victory at Poitiers made "Charles Martel the supreme power in France, and enabled him to establish his dynasty."²⁰ He then follows Gibbon, who affirms that "the victory of the Franks was complete and final; Aquitaine was recovered by the arms of Eudes; the Arabs never resumed the conquest of Gaul and they were soon driven beyond the Pyrenees by Charles Martel and his valiant race."²¹ Indeed, Gibbon goes so far as to claim that Britain was saved from "calamities" such as "the sanctity and truth of the revelation of Mohamet."²² Creasy considers Poitiers "a decisive check to the career of Arab conquest in Western Europe." He goes on to declare that the battle "rescued Christendom from Islam, preserved the relics of ancient and the germs of modern civilization, and reestablished the old superiority of the Indo-European over the Semitic family of mankind."²³

What Makes a Battle Decisive?

For those historians who have ventured opinions on a broad scale regarding decisive battles in the early Middle Ages, long-term impact, indeed very long-term impact, the more far reaching the better, tends to be at issue. What actually happened on the battlefield seems far less important than its long-term consequences. Many of these studies obviously fall victim to the post hoc fallacy. They have constructed chains of causal explanation as though they were

18 Ibid., 54.

19 Ibid., 15 and 6, for the quotations, respectively.

20 Fuller, *Decisive Battles*, 1.166.

21 Ibid., 1.17–18.

22 Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, 6.15, for the quotation.

23 Creasy, *Fifteen Decisive Battles*, 159.

discussing historical laws. Rather they were demonstrating the lack of logical validity of their arguments. The main force driving these excursions into causal fantasy is the ahistorical question: what would have happened if the other side had won? It is obvious to professional historians that we cannot study that which did not happen because it leaves no evidence of having happened. Counterfactual propositions are meaningless, as we cannot even try to rethink the ideas of actors on the historical stage that never were thought.²⁴ It must be admitted, nevertheless, that scenarios contrary to fact have a certain unhealthy attraction for those uninitiated into the proper study of history and its methods.

As seen above, historians, even ones as distinguished as Sir Edward Gibbon, when dealing with the concept of decisive battle during the early Middle Ages, have been unable to provide insight of even heuristic value in regard to its contemporary context. They merely project a long-term historical chain of causation to explain “decisiveness.” Therefore, we may perhaps gain some insight into this matter of decisive battle from military theorists, who, at the least, on occasion, may have planned to fight such a battle or to have advised others who actually did make and execute such plans. The very idea of decisive battle, in military terms, was given wide modern circulation before the mid-19th century through Clausewitz’s justly renowned *Vom Krieg* published in 1829.²⁵

Clausewitz devoted an entire section of *On War*, book 4, to battle and discusses it on other occasions, as well. In dealing with the nature of battle. Clausewitz has much to say that is of relevance to the late antique era. He avers that troops move calmly into position.²⁶ This, of course, is relevant to most if not all set-piece battles, that is, those in which surprise is not a factor. Not only were both Châlons and Poitiers set-piece battles but insofar as can be ascertained so too was Vouillé. In short, in all three battles, one side, that is, the Romano-Visigothic army, the Visigoths, and the Muslims, at Châlons, Vouillé, and Poitiers, respectively, were intent upon pursuing the tactical offensive, while the Huns, Merovingian Franks, and Carolingian Franks, respectively, were willing to defend the ground in their possession and, thus, to give battle.

Clausewitz also points out that in most modern battles, there are various exchanges over the course of a day’s hostilities. Such efforts, e.g., charges by small groups, both of foot and horse, exchanges of fire in various patterns and for various purposes, feints and flanking initiatives, tend, in general, to be

24 R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, rev. ed. with introduction by Jan van der Dussen (Oxford, 1994).

25 All references here are to Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed./trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, 1976).

26 *On War*, 226.

inconclusive. On the whole, darkness puts an end to the day's engagement.²⁷ Clausewitz exposes the inconclusive nature of most "modern" battles as a means of reproach. He asserts that the purpose of war is to defeat the enemy and the purpose of battle is to destroy the enemy forces. The "destruction" of the enemy's forces "by death, injury, or any other means" must be either complete or "enough to make him stop fighting." He continues, "The complete or partial destruction of the enemy must be regarded as the sole object of all engagements."²⁸ It is in this respect that a battle may be considered decisive.

It is startling that in regard to the treatment of both Châlons and Poitiers by the historians discussed above little or nothing survives of Clausewitz's analysis except the term "decisive battle" itself. Of course, Edward Gibbon cannot be held responsible for not knowing Clausewitz's classic study. But, the specialists in military history discussed above cannot have been ignorant of the idea of decisive battle, the German military theorist's most important idea. In this context, the example of General Fuller may be noted. Fuller professional reputation, in fact, rests upon his work as a military theorist and not as a military historian. He knew Clausewitz's work very well.²⁹

Perhaps most surprising, however, is the treatment of these battles by Hans Delbrück, one of the early 20th century's primary experts on Clausewitz's thinking and the father of the modern study of military history.³⁰ Delbrück considers Châlons to have been a great battle, but says nothing of its decisiveness.³¹ He mentions the Battle of Vouillé merely as an example of Gallo-Roman fighting men having been integrated into the armies of the newly created Romano-German kingdoms.³² By contrast with Châlons and Vouillé, Delbrück waxes eloquent regarding Charles Martel's victory at Poitiers. He observes, echoing many of the scholars discussed above, "There was no more important battle in world history than the Battle of Tours, in which Charles Martel stopped the Arabs and threw them back." He goes on to proclaim that

27 *On War*, 226, gives a much more limited description and makes clear that he does so, largely because many of these details are dealt with in other contexts.

28 *On War*, 227.

29 Azar Gat, *A History of Military Thought from the Enlightenment to the Cold War* (Oxford, 2001), 531–60.

30 Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte*, 6 vols. (Berlin, 1900–1936), of which vol. 2 deals with the period under discussion here. This volume is now available as *History of the Art of War: Within the Framework of Political History*, ed. Walter J. Renfroe (Westport CT, 1980), and will be cited here for the convenience of the reader. Regarding Delbrück's career as an historian, see Gordon A. Craig, "Delbrück: Military Historian," in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret et al., 2nd ed. (Princeton, 1986), 326–53; and as a theorist, see Gat, *History of Military Thought*, 371–77.

31 Delbrück, *History of the Art of War*, 328.

32 *Ibid.*, 398–400.

although “we know almost nothing about the details of the battle ... the warriorhood which was developed in the Frankish kingdom ... saved the future of the Germanic-Romanic and Christian world.” None of Clausewitz’s teaching in regard to the nature of decisive battle enters into Delbrück’s discussion of this encounter. Rather, he sounds much like Gibbon.³³

By contrast, the work of J. F. Verbruggen is of exceptional interest in regard to Clausewitz and the concept of decisive battle. Throughout his *The Art of War in Western Europe during the Middle Ages*, Verbruggen works diligently to prove that medieval warfare was the equal of that in the ancient world and in the early modern period. The traditional view of medieval warfare, as, for example, expressed by the noted theoritican Liddell Hart, “in the west during the Middle Ages the spirit of feudal chivalry was inimical to military art,” is rejected.³⁴ To sustain his views, Verbruggen compares medieval military strategies to Clausewitz’s model and finds that they fit together very well. He declares, in this context, that Clovis sought “decisive” battle in 507 at Vouillé and Charles Martel did the same at Poitiers in 732. Thus, these efforts meet Clausewitz’s criteria. Verbruggen, however, does not analyse either of these battles and, in fact, misleads his readers when he asserts that in 732 Charles “attacked” the Muslims.³⁵

Finally, we come to the basic treatment of medieval warfare, *War in the Middle Ages* by Philippe Contamine. Like Verbruggen, Contamine believes that

33 Ibid., 441, for the quotation. It is to be noted, however, that Delbrück (375–84) characterizes the Byzantine victories in the field over the Goths as decisive, but does not explain the criteria he used. Among the major specialists in medieval military history, whose works are traditionally consulted, the record is not illuminating regarding the decisive battle phenomenon. Charles Oman, *History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (orig. 1924; repr. New York, 1964), says nothing of decisiveness in regard to any of these battles, but argues (21) that “cavalry” was the decisive arm of both sides at the Battle of Châlons. Ferdinand Lot, *L’Art militaire et les armées au Moyen Age et dans la Proche-Orient* (Paris, 1946), 1.26, discusses Châlons for the purpose of speculating that the Romans could not have defeated the Huns without the help of the Visigoths. He discusses Vouillé (80–83) and mocks previous writers, mostly former military officers, who have tried to reconstruct the battle on the basis of Gregory’s account, which he quotes in full. Lot says nothing regarding the decisive nature of the battle. Regarding Charles Martel’s victory at Poitiers (111–14), Lot observes that the Frankish victory was “plus décisif que le wali Abd-ar-Râhman avant trouvé le mort dans l’action.”

34 See B. H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York, 1967), 75, for the quotation.

35 J. F. Verbruggen, *The Art of War in Western Europe during the Middle Ages, from the Eighth Century to 1340*, 2nd ed., trans. Sumner Willard and S. C. M. Southern (Woodbridge UK, 1997), 276–350. See 276 for Vouillé and 277 for Poitiers. For a critique of some of Verbruggen’s more doctrinaire views, see B. S. Bachrach, “Verbruggen’s ‘Cavalry’ and the Lyon-Thesis,” *Journal of Medieval Military History* 4 (2006): 137–63.

the study of war in the Middle Ages is very important and avers, "It is pure blindness to leave a medieval gap in a list of military talents from Caesar to the sixteenth century."³⁶ Contrary to Verbruggen, however, Contamine does not use Clausewitz's categories to make his case and does not, in fact, focus on battles. Rather, he demonstrates that battles were very rare during the Middle Ages because military leaders maintained a "siege mentality."³⁷ However, when Contamine does treat battle, he invokes Clausewitzian tones and observes, without supporting evidence, that "it remains the case that the pitched battle was conceived as the culminating point of a war, the chief episode which, although limited in area and concentrated in time, was the object of all fears, expectations and hopes."³⁸

Contamine does not treat the Battle of Châlons, which according to his chronology falls into the domain of Roman history. The Battle of Vouillé is mentioned twice but is not examined in military terms.³⁹ Finally, Contamine does not treat the Battle of Poitiers in detail and implicitly rejects any notion that it was decisive in the manner quoted above, that is, as a "culminating point of a war."⁴⁰ Contamine's influence in rejecting a discussion of decisive battle, despite the importance of the ideas of Clausewitz and, perhaps even more importantly those of Verbruggen, seems to have taken hold. Thus, for example, Halsall begins his textbook in 450, but ignores the Battle of Châlons, says nothing about the nature of Clovis's victory at Vouillé, and treats Poitiers as an insoluble source problem. Strategy, in general, much less the idea of decisive battle, is ignored.⁴¹

Application of the Clausewitz Model

Clausewitz's model permits us to gain some insight into the battles of Châlons, Vouillé, and Poitiers with regard to modern professional military ideas regarding decisiveness. It is clear that in all three engagements, the defeated army, that is, the Huns, Visigoths, and Muslims, respectively, suffered losses that were of a sufficient order of magnitude to convince the commanders in all three situations that they could not continue the battle the next day. In this regard, the evidence shows that both the Visigoths in 507 and Muslims in 732 fled. In both cases,

36 Philippe Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, trans. Michael Jones (Oxford, 1984), 237.

37 Ibid., 219.

38 Ibid., 228–29.

39 Ibid., 17, 262.

40 Ibid., 22, 24, 179–83.

41 Guy Halsall, *Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West, 450–900* (London/New York, 2003), 14, 194, regarding Poitiers. On this work see my review in *American Historical Review* 109 (2004): 959.

the field of battle was abandoned to the victorious Franks. At Châlons, Attila withdrew his badly defeated army into his fortified encampment and refused to continue the battle.

It is important to make clear, in this context, that further offensive action by the Romano-Visigothic army at Châlons would have required that it enjoy great superiority in numbers, i.e., at least a 4–5:1 ratio. In addition, with the Huns' heavy reliance on their highly effective recurve bows, any effort to storm Attila's encampment would have resulted in massive casualties to Aëtius's army.⁴² An alternative was for the allies to lay siege to the encampment and starve out the Huns. This was impractical because the Huns could eat their horses and thus hold out for a very long time. In addition, Aëtius's Visigothic allies were in a great hurry to return home. Thus, with the connivance of Aëtius, who probably hoped to be able to use Hunnic troops at a later date, Attila was permitted to retreat from his camp without opposition a day or so after the battle and fled east across the Rhine.⁴³ Despite his losses at Châlons, Attila still was capable of raising an army in 452 for the purpose of invading Italy.⁴⁴ It cannot be ascertained, however, what percentage of this new army was drawn from among the survivors of Châlons and what percentage were new recruits.

Like Aëtius at Châlons, Charles Martel did not order a pursuit of the fleeing enemy. Thus, he failed to cause a vastly increased number of casualties and to take large numbers of prisoners, that is, to destroy the enemy army effectively. The immediate reason for the lack of a vigorous pursuit by Charles's army is obvious. The Muslim force, which was on the offensive, broke off its attacks against Charles Martel's phalanx of foot soldiers as night fell. Frankish pursuit in the dark would have been tactically unsound for several reasons. First, the Arab armies were practiced in the feigned-retreat tactic. Therefore, drawing the Franks from their defensive position would have been an effective ruse to destroy the cohesion of the Frankish phalanx. Maintaining unit cohesion is especially difficult for a pursuing force in the darkness. The Franks also were well informed regarding the feigned-retreat tactic, and Charles was not about to be outmaneuvered at the end of the day. Finally, the Frankish army had been

42 B. S. Bachrach and Rutherford Aris, "Military Technology and Garrison Organization: Some Observations on Anglo-Saxon Military Thinking in Light of the Burghal Hidage," *Technology and Culture* 31 (1990): 1–17; and reprinted with the same pagination in B. S. Bachrach, *Warfare and Military Organization in Pre-Crusade Europe* (London, 2002), where it is emphasized that the quality of the defenses are far less important than the "fire power" that the defenders could generate.

43 The basic treatment of this battle remains, Ulf Täckholm, "Aëtius and the Battle on the Catalaunian Fields," *Opuscula Romana* 7 (1969): 260–76.

44 See B. S. Bachrach, "The Hun Army at the Battle of Châlons (451): An Essay in Military Demography," in *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung: Angewandte Methoden der Frühmittelalterforschung*, ed. Karl Brunner and Brigitte Merta (Vienna/Munich, 1994), 59–67.

operating to the north of the battlefield and had not had the opportunity to reconnoiter the territory to the south, the direction in which the Muslims withdrew. Were the Frankish army to have undertaken a pursuit as night fell, it would have been handicapped by ignorance of the terrain as well as by darkness. Thus, Charles ordered his forces to retire into their own fortified camp, *castrum*, to await the continuation of battle the next morning.⁴⁵

On the morning of the next day, the Frankish army marched from its camp against the fortified Muslim camp, but found it largely deserted. The greater part of Abd al Rachman's forces had retreated during the night. The enemy *castrum* was manned by a relatively small delaying force that rapidly fell to Charles's army when it stormed the defenses. The Muslims had abandoned most of their equipment and were traveling light and fast. The booty that they had gathered over the previous weeks and whatever prisoners they had taken were left behind. As a result of what may have been even as much as a ten-hour head start, the Muslims could outrun any pursuit that Charles might have wished to mount. In addition, there still was the matter of Charles's ignorance of the terrain further to the south and the capacity of the retreating Muslim force to lay ambushes along the route.⁴⁶

In strategic terms, Charles was certainly pleased by a victory that forced the enemy to retreat. His primary objective was to stop the further northward movement of the Muslims and the danger these operations posed to the shrine of Saint Martin at Tours. This objective had been achieved. The Frankish army surely was pleased with the booty that had been obtained with the capture of the enemy camp. Finally, Charles gained a certain renown not only for having stopped the Muslims but for having freed numerous Christian prisoners who were being taken back to Spain to be sold as slaves.

Charles also was operating in a strategic alliance with Duke Eudo of Aquitaine. Thus, the Frankish forces were not the only army in Gaul that was opposed to the Muslims. Charles had made a treaty with Duke Eudo, and the Frankish campaign that culminated in victory at Poitiers was based upon a mutual aid pact. By moving his armies further to the south at this time, even in pursuit of a retreating Muslim army, Charles probably would have infringed upon Eudo's autonomy, which had been arranged by the above mentioned treaty. This treaty, in point of fact, was maintained until 760.⁴⁷ Only when Waiofer, Eudo's successor as duke of Aquitaine, broke the treaty with King Pippin, Charles Martel's son, did the Franks invade Aquitaine and conquer it in a series of campaigns that lasted until 768.⁴⁸

45 Bachrach, *Early Carolingian Warfare*, 94, 170–72, 100–184.

46 Ibid., 170–72.

47 Ibid., 30–32.

48 Ibid., 207–10.

Vouillé

Military historians who focused particularly on the Battle of Vouillé have expended considerable effort to reconstruct the details of the battle, largely in its presumed topographical context.⁴⁹ Although these efforts have enjoyed little success in unearthing the details of the battle, they have engendered much fruitless controversy.⁵⁰ A survey of modern works dealing with the reign of Clovis and late antique Gaul indicates that they have little or nothing to say regarding the decisive nature of the Battle of Vouillé.⁵¹ For example, Wood observes: “There he [Clovis] defeated Alaric II.” Nothing is said regarding whether the battle was decisive or anything of its military significance.⁵² By contrast, Eugen Ewig considers Vouillé “einen vollständigen Sieg,” which implies decisiveness.⁵³ While Michel Rouche does not discuss the decisive nature of Vouillé in Clausewitzian terms, he does place great weight on Clovis’s victory. He sees it as the fundamental action that made possible the accomplishments of the remainder of Clovis’s reign.⁵⁴ Karl Ferdinand Werner, without actually

49 See Mathisen’s essay on Voulon in this volume Vouillé.

50 In addition to the works cited by Lot in *L’Art militaire* 1.80–83, see Colonel Lecointre, “La Bataille de 507 entre Clovis et Alaric,” *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de l’Ouest* 3rd ser. 4 (1916–18): 423–56, whose main contribution has been to cast doubt on the traditional location of the battle. By contrast, Godefroid Kurth, *Clovis* (Paris, 1901), 2.77–78, who was not a military historian, provides a plausible reconstruction of the actual battle from which my account varies little. Kurth (75) does venture the opinion that the Battle of Vouillé decided “les destinées de l’Europe,” but does not raise the question of “decisive” battle.

51 For historians several points are important in the context of decisive battle. This was a concept that was well understood in the west well prior to Vouillé and one that has a continuous history to the present. Thus, with regard to the planning and execution of battles our ancient and medieval predecessors sometimes planned to fight a decisive battle and sometimes even succeeded. The idea of *Vernichtungskrieg*, e.g., did not originate with Clausewitz. I have identified fifteen books dealing with Clovis and the Merovingians by a broad spectrum of French scholars that appeared between 1995 and 1997. These, in general, have nothing to say about the nature of Vouillé in terms of its military decisiveness. Those works meriting notice are treated below.

52 I. N. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751* (London/New York, 1994), 46–48, 55–56, 106, 112, 164, for mentions of Vouillé, which he believes actually took place at Voulon; and 46, for the quotation.

53 Eugen Ewig, *Die Merowinger und das Frankenreich* (Stuttgart, 1988), 26, 28, does not pursue the idea of decisiveness in Clausewitzian terms, but makes clear that the victory made possible further conquest.

54 Michel Rouche, *L’Aquitaine des Wisigoths aux Arabes, 418–781: Naissance d’une région* (Paris, 1979), 45–48; does the same in idem, ed., *Clovis: Histoire et Mémoire* (Paris, 1997), 309, 335.

employing a Clausewitzian model, comes close when he avers that at Vouillé “les Visigoths fuerent écrasés. ... Le ‘Royaume de Toulouse’ disparaissait.”⁵⁵

Diplomatic Background

The Battle of Vouillé was the opening military encounter of a campaign that some have seen as orchestrated by the Frankish king Clovis (481–511) to destroy the Visigothic kingdom in Aquitaine and to conquer the southwestern quadrant of Gaul. It must remain a matter for speculation, however, whether the idea for this campaign of conquest was initiated in Constantinople. An imperial policy intended to strengthen the position of the Franks, now Nicene Christians with the support of the episcopal hierarchy in the north against the Arian Visigoths and Ostrogoths, surely would have been attractive to Emperor Anastasius.⁵⁶ A strong case, nevertheless, can be made that at this time Clovis had the diplomatic and monetary support of the imperial government for Frankish military operations against the Visigoths.⁵⁷

Emperor Anastasius’s envoys met with Clovis, probably at his capital in Paris.⁵⁸ The Frankish king, in accordance with traditional late Roman policy, probably was awarded the rank of an imperial general. At this time he also may have been provided with an appropriate uniform.⁵⁹ In addition, it also may have

55 Karl Ferdinand Werner, *Histoire de France*, vol. 1: *Les origines* (Paris, 1984), 309–10.

56 For a contrary view that the conversion did not happen until after Vouillé, see D. R. Shanzer, “Dating the Baptism of Clovis: The Bishop of Vienne vs. the Bishop of Tours,” *Early Medieval Europe* 7.1 (1998): 29–57; and Wood’s essay in this volume. In this context, attention must also be given to the ill-timed revolt of Hispano-Romans in Catalonia led by a certain Peter. See Rouche, *L’Aquitaine*, 48.

57 Greg. *Hist.* 2.38 (*Libri Historiarum* X, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, SRM 1.1). The coins that Clovis later used during his victory ceremony at Tours probably formed part of this subsidy. Regarding the Byzantine use of subsidies to support their policies in Gaul, see, e.g., Greg. *Hist.* 3.32; 6.2, 42; 7.36; 8.18. This is a subject in need of more study. For a case for extensive Byzantine involvement with the Franks at this time, see Anthea Harris, *Byzantium, Britain, and the West: The Archaeology of Cultural Identity, AD 400–650* (Stroud, Gloucestershire/Charleston SC, 2003), 26–33.

58 Regarding these negotiations, see the discussion by Kurth, *Clovis*, 2.61–62.

59 Michael McCormick, “Clovis at Tours, Byzantine Public Ritual and the Origins of Medieval Ruler Symbolism,” in *Das Reich und die Barbaren*, ed. E. K. Chrysos and A. Schwarcz (Vienna/Cologne, 1989), 155–80. For traditional imperial policy in this regard, see Lellia Cracco Ruggini, “Les généraux franc aux IVE–Ve siècles et leurs groupes aristocratiques,” in Rouche, *Clovis*, 1.673–88. Providing Clovis with the rank and uniform of an imperial general prior to the beginning of military operations makes considerable sense as a commission to lead “Romans” into battle and to garner the support of Gallo-Romans in Aquitaine. Regarding relevant “Roman” troops, see B. S. Bachrach, “The Origin of Armorican Chivalry,” *Technology and Culture* 10 (1969): 166–

been at this time that the imperial envoys provided Clovis with a monetary subsidy. Anastasius's envoys additionally may have conveyed several promises to Clovis from the emperor that would be fulfilled should he be successful in defeating the Visigoths and driving them out of Aquitaine. Clovis would be elevated to the status of *patricius* and would be named honorary consul or perhaps even regular consul.⁶⁰ Finally, if victorious, Clovis was to be recognized at Constantinople as a high-ranking imperial governor with the title equivalent to the Egyptian "augustal prefect" or some similar form of honorific. The provinces to be considered under Clovis's *regnum* consisted, it would seem, at least of Aquitania Prima and Secunda and perhaps also Narbonensis Prima and Secunda and Novempopulana.⁶¹

It is not at all clear exactly when Anastasius's envoys made this arrangement with Clovis, which presupposed an understanding of the effectiveness of Frankish military power and the potential for support in Aquitaine. The Byzantine government surely knew that as early as ca. 486, the Visigothic monarch Alaric II showed fear of Clovis or, at least, of the army he could potentially mobilize for military operations south of the Loire.⁶² By 506 Clovis

71; and reprinted with the same pagination in B. S. Bachrach, *Armies and Politics in the Early Medieval West* (London, 1993).

- 60 Greg. *Hist.* 2.38, is to be read in concert with the pathbreaking assessment of this chapter by McCormick, "Clovis at Tours," 155–80. See also R. W. Mathisen, "Clovis, Anastase et Grégoire de Tours: consul, patrice et roi," in Rouche, *Clovis*, 1.395–407, who juxtaposes the imperial role of these titles with that of Clovis's royal aspirations and leans toward the latter. I see no reason why it is necessary to pursue an either/or interpretation as contrasted to a both/and view of the situation.
- 61 Greg. *Hist.* 2.38, observes: *ab ea die tamquam consul aut augustus est vocitatus* ("from this day he was addressed like a consul or an augustus"). It is obvious that Clovis was not made an *augustus* by the emperor. However, it is also likely that Gregory did not obtain information from a written source such as the *codicilli* sent from Constantinople, but more probably through a somewhat corrupted oral tradition based on these documents. Whereas other areas of the late Roman Empire had Vicars, in Egypt the Augustal Prefect served in the capacity of a Vicar with authority extending over several; see A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602: A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey* (Norman OK, 1964), 1.281. In regard to the tendency of inaccuracies or confusions to enter orally transmitted information, see Andrew B. Gallia, "Reassessing the 'Cumaeon Chronicle': Greek Chronology and Roman History in Dionysius of Halicarnassus," *JRS* 97 (2007): 50–67; and from a more general perspective, see Jan Vansina, *Oral Traditions as History* (Madison, 1985). In this interpretation, I part company with with Olivier Guillot, "Clovis 'August,' vecteur des conceptions romano-chrétiennes," in Rouche, *Clovis*, 1.705–37. It is my view that Guillot's excellent study in the very broadly based history of ideas regarding rulership departs too far from context and, in effect, credits Gregory or his western source with making claims regarding Clovis's status that Emperor Anastasius would neither grant nor recognize.
- 62 Greg. *Hist.* 2.27. Regarding the development of Clovis's army during the two decades preceeding his invasion of Aquitaine, see two studies by B. S. Bachrach, "The Imperial Roots of Merovingian Military Organization," in *Military Aspects of Scandinavian Society*

had demonstrated his military effectiveness in conquering northern Gaul during the previous decade.⁶³ In this context, there is good reason to believe that at least several Nicene bishops in Aquitaine were working to support the cause of the Roman-Christian king of the Franks against the Arian Visigoths.⁶⁴

Alaric surely was as well informed regarding Clovis's military effectiveness and his likely interest in Aquitaine, as were the Byzantines. Alaric even may have learned that Emperor Anastasius, as suggested above, was interested in using Clovis's army against the Visigoths.⁶⁵ Alaric's close ally and father-in-law, the Ostrogothic king Theodoric, who ruled much of Italy, also seems to have believed that Clovis's war aims were coming to focus on Aquitaine and the Visigothic kingdom. Thus, Theodoric strove through diplomatic efforts to dissuade the Frankish ruler from attacking the Visigoths. Additionally, he made it known that he would lend his support to Alaric.⁶⁶ Theodoric also contacted various other kings on the borders of the *regnum Francorum*, e.g., the rulers of the Heruli, Warni, and Thuringians, in order to recruit them to help stop Clovis's foreseen aggression in Aquitaine against the Visigoths.⁶⁷ It seems clear

in a European Perspective, AD 1–1300, ed. Anne Norgard Jorgensen and Birthe L. Clausen (Copenhagen, 1997), 25–31 (in quarto); and "Quelques observations sur la composition et les caractéristiques des armées de Clovis," in Rouche, *Clovis*, 1.689–703.

- 63 Regarding Clovis's conquests and their chronology, see B. S. Bachrach, "Procopius and the Chronology of Clovis's Reign," *Viator* 1 (1970): 21–31; and reprinted with the same pagination in B. S. Bachrach, *Armies and Politics in the Early Medieval West* (London, 1993).
- 64 Greg. *Hist.* 2.36, calls attention to Bishop Quintianus of Rodez. For other bishops who would seem to have opposed Visigothic rule, see B. S. Bachrach, *Merovingian Military Organization, 481–751* (Minneapolis, 1972), 7; and Rouche, *L'Aquitaine*, 45–46. See also Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 46–48, who appears to be more interested in showing the biases of Gregory of Tours than in understanding opposition to Alaric among non-Arians in Aquitaine. In order to do this, Wood often reads sources other than Gregory as plain text. This, of course, is no more valid than reading Gregory as plain text.
- 65 Kurth, *Clovis*, 2.60–67, suggests that such information was likely to come from Theodoric the Ostrogoth. The latter's relations with the east Roman emperor had been deteriorating and by 506 were very poor. Theodoric, however, was very well placed to learn that Anastasius was courting a military alliance with the Frankish king. In this context, it is to be noted that following Clovis's victory over the Visigoths, war broke out between the Ostrogoths and the empire, which, with the benefit of hindsight, we can suppose was Theodoric's worry as early as 506 and part of Anastasius's overall plan. See the peculiar treatment of these events by Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 48–49.
- 66 Theodoric advises Clovis to cease his aggressive activities with regard to the Alamanni (Cass. *Variae* 2.41) and tries to blunt what seems to be Clovis's intention to go to war against Alaric (*Hist.* 3.4). In this latter communication, Theodoric makes clear that the "maliciousness" of a foreign power is at work in trying to bring Clovis to war against Alaric. Theodoric also emphasizes that he will not stand by and let Clovis attack Alaric if mediation fails. For a useful commentary on this letter, see Rouche, *Clovis*, 420–21.
- 67 Cass. *Variae* 3.3.

that when Theodoric wrote to these kings, he believed that King Gundobad of the Burgundians would support him against Clovis.⁶⁸ Ultimately, Theodoric was proved wrong in this regard.⁶⁹

In light of both Visigothic and Ostrogothic concerns regarding Clovis, Alaric called for a conference with the Frankish king in 506. The two monarchs met on an island located in the Loire River, not far from the *vicus* of Amboise.⁷⁰ The meeting of the two rulers on an island in the river illustrates symbolically that the Loire served as the border between the two kingdoms. The major result of this conference was the establishment of a nonaggression pact in which both rulers promised mutual friendship.⁷¹ It also has been argued that Alaric agreed to pay a *stipendium* of some sort to Clovis.⁷² And it is probably at this time that Alaric agreed to accept Clovis's *ditio* over the fortress cities of Nantes, Angers, Tours, and Orléans,⁷³ which, for all intents and purposes, gave the Frankish ruler control of the lower Loire valley with its immense agricultural and commercial importance.⁷⁴ As in other Gallic cities, the overwhelming majority

68 Cass. *Variae* 3.3 alludes to Gundobad's support for Theodoric's policy.

69 Rouche, *L'Aquitaine*, 48–49.

70 Greg. *Hist.* 2.35.

71 Greg. *Hist.* 2.35. It is important to emphasize here that Gregory, who was abnormally partial to Clovis, frankly admits that the Frankish king, who already was a Christian, broke his oath when he went to war against Alaric. Gregory writes *promissa sibi amicitia*, which is usually understood by modern scholars to mean that there was a sworn pact. Thus, Gregory may perhaps have used the language of promise rather than of oath-taking to absolve Clovis of perjury.

72 Based on additions to the Copenhagen manuscript of Prosper's chronicle, Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 47, speculates that Alaric paid tribute to Clovis after the latter had attacked Bordeaux in 498, but these additions mention neither Clovis nor tribute. The chronology of Clovis's reign and the logistics for such a campaign in 498 make it virtually impossible for the Frankish king to have been involved personally. See, Bachrach, "Procopius." However, the letter by Avitus (*Epist.* 87), which calls attention to financial matters in the context of this war, may support the suggestion that Alaric agreed to pay a subsidy to Clovis in 506. See D. R. Shanzer and I. N. Wood. *Avitus of Vienne: Selected Letters and Prose*, TTH 38 (Liverpool, 2002).

73 For a contrary view, see Mathisen's essay on the First Franco-Visigothic War in this volume.

74 In light of Clovis's strong record of conquest and of the successful military operations in the Loire valley undertaken by his father Childeric, it is clear that Alaric regarded the Frankish king with some trepidation. As a result, he was prepared to make significant concessions. Theodoric, who evaluated the Visigothic army as weak and unprepared, had advocated that Alaric maintain peace with Clovis at virtually any cost. See Cass. *Variae* 3.1. Perhaps more importantly, Greg. *Hist.* 2.37, while listing Clovis's conquests following the victory at Vouillé, makes no mention of Nantes, Angers, Tours, and Orléans as being taken by the Frankish army. These omissions permit the inference that Clovis had gained possession of these cities before the battle. Finally, prior to the invasion of 507, Clovis's envoys are seen to operate freely at Tours. Finally, when the

of the populations of all four of these *civitates*, that is, the *urbes* and their administrative circumscriptions, were Roman Christians, who, led by their Nicene clergy were, at least in principle, hostile to the Arianism of the Visigoths.

Indeed, with respect to the “religious card,” Gregory of Tours tends to credit or at least to infer that bishops such as Quintianus of Rodez, Volusianus of Tours, Aprunculus of Langres, and Verus of Tours were engaged in actions against Arian domination primarily for religious reasons.⁷⁵ The situation in each case, however, may have been far more complex. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that simply because Gregory’s *parti pris* was to emphasize religious motivation when he treated especially those bishops whom he regarded as virtuous is not a valid reason to assume that information presented in the *Ten Books of History*, which depicts a prelate acting for religious reasons is to be considered suspect or even to be rejected *tout court*.⁷⁶ And Roman opposition also would have arisen because Gallo-Romans often found Visigothic behavior to be objectionable in regard to their efforts to occupy various cities (such as Clermont), their actual occupation of cities (such as Arles), along with the implantation of garrisons, the destruction of crops, and the confiscation of property.

It is not clear whether Clovis negotiated in good faith with Alaric at Amboise or whether the Frankish king already had made his arrangements, noted above, with Emperor Anastasius. If the agreement had already been made with Constantinople, then the meeting at Amboise and the pact negotiated between the two kings may be seen as ruse perpetrated by Clovis to mislead Alaric and Theodoric, his Ostrogothic ally, into relaxing their vigilance. Had Clovis refused to meet with Alaric or had he refused to agree to seal a pact of *amicitia*, both Gothic kings would have had their suspicions confirmed regarding Frankish aggressive intentions south of the Loire. However, if Clovis had not yet made his agreement with Anastasius, the pact with Alaric may have been negotiated in good faith, since the Visigothic king had made so many important concessions. Nevertheless, whatever concessions Alaric may have made, it is obvious that the Byzantines simply outbid the Visigoths and bought themselves a Frankish ally.

Frankish army crossed the Loire in the environs of Tours, there is no mention of a Visigothic garrison providing opposition.

75 Greg. *Hist.* 2.22, 23, 36; 10.31.

76 For Gregory’s controlling assumptions, see Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (550–800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, 1988), 112–234; and note also the ambiguous manner in which Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 46–47, treats the matter of religious motivation in regard to opposition by Roman Christian prelates to the Visigothic monarchy.

Prior to mobilizing his army for the invasion of Aquitaine, Clovis arranged a military alliance with the Burgundian king, Gundobad.⁷⁷ This pact called for Burgundian forces to undertake military operations against various Visigothic fortress cities and lesser strongholds in the south, e.g., Limoges, and to aid Clovis's forces in besieging the fortress cities of Arles and Carcassonne.⁷⁸ It also seems likely that as part of the campaign strategy a Burgundian army was to move west into Gaul. This would have two tactical goals. If Theoderic sent an army to support Alaric, it was the task of the Burgundians to interpose themselves between that force and the Visigothic army so that the Ostrogoths would be unable to provide direct support against Clovis. If the Ostrogothic army did not appear in a timely manner, however, then the Burgundian expeditionary force could move north either in an attempt to catch the Visigoths in a pincer or to seize any strongholds that the retreating army might use to regroup.⁷⁹ The distances involved had a direct impact on both the speed with which communications could be exchanged and military forces could be deployed. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that Gundobad was expected to send troops directly against Alaric's army in order to aid Clovis north of Poitiers.

War

It cannot be ascertained exactly when Alaric obtained sufficient intelligence to conclude that the "island accord," negotiated the previous year in the environs of Amboise, was a dead letter. However, it may be assumed, in the worst case, that the Visigothic king learned of Clovis's intentions when the latter issued orders throughout the *regnum Francorum* for the mobilization of the army. At roughly the same time, Clovis also sent a circular letter to all of the bishops into whose sees the army was likely to pass, making clear that he had ordered his men to respect the people and property of the church.⁸⁰ These orders probably were

77 See Patrick Amory, "Names, Ethnic Identity, and Community in Fifth-Sixth-Century Burgundy," *Viator* 25 (1994): 11–12, who emphasizes that Gundobad still recognized himself as a subject of the emperor.

78 See, Rouche, *Clovis*, 311–12, which remains the best study of Clovis's reign and of the sources. However, I disagree with Rouche's implication that the Burgundians somehow acted without following a prearranged plan. In premodern times, because of the pace of communications and troop movements, the detailed planning of campaign strategy well prior to deployment and engagement was essential. See the discussion by Bachrach, *Early Carolingian Warfare*, 202–42.

79 Rouche, *Clovis*, 309–11, covers the Burgundian operations, but does not comment on the overall strategic picture.

80 Clovis issued a capitulary for the purpose of mobilizing troops throughout the *regnum Francorum*. See *Capitularia Regum Francorum*, ed. A. Boretius, MGH Leges 2.1 (Hannover, 1883). This document, in its present form, is the letter sent by Clovis to the

sent out in late February or early March 507.⁸¹ Alaric sought military support from Theodoric and ordered the mobilization of the Visigothic army in response to Clovis's obvious provocation and his abrogation of the pact negotiated at Amboise.⁸² Alaric's march north, approximately 340 kilometers from Toulouse to the Poitiers region, and Clovis's march south from Paris to the area around Vouillé, approximately 310 kilometers, permits the inference that the Visigothic king learned of Clovis's plans shortly after the Frankish king issued mobilization orders. In response, he mustered his troops as rapidly as did his adversary.⁸³

The Visigothic Army

Alaric's military forces were composed of both Visigoths and Gallo-Romans. The former were the descendants of those men who had fought so successfully more than a half-century earlier under Aëtius's overall command against Attila at Châlons. By the early 6th century, many of the Visigothic soldiers based in Aquitaine had benefited over several decades from the gradual mutation into landed estates of the shares of tax revenue (*sortes*) their forbearers had received from the imperial government to support their military efforts. Therefore, many of the Visigoths, as a result of their landed wealth, were able to continue to

bishops in which the Frankish king embedded several but not all of the *capitula* from his capitulary for the mobilization of his army.

- 81 Regarding the traditional time of the year for the muster of the military forces of the *regnum Francorum*, see B. S. Bachrach, "Was the Marchfield Part of the Frankish Constitution?" *Medieval Studies* 36 (1974): 78–85; and reprinted with the same pagination in B. S. Bachrach, *Armies and Politics in the Early Medieval West* (London, 1993). N.B. The "normal" or institutionalized period of time for the mobilization of the military forces of the *regnum Francorum* can be identified. However, the exigencies of any particular situation could and did result in modifications. In the present context, it is noteworthy that the traditional high point of flooding in the Loire valley is March. It is probable, therefore, that the invasion was timed to postdate these floods. Regarding the flood period, see Roger Dion, *Histoire des levées de la Loire* (Paris, 1961), 51–66.
- 82 Procop. BG 5.12 provides a substantial quantity of information regarding the diplomatic and military situation that culminated in Clovis's victory at Vouillé. However, the account, as a whole, is rather muddled and much of it is simply inaccurate. One bit of information that can be trusted is Procopius's statement that Alaric requested military aid from Theodoric. Unfortunately, Averil Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (London/New York, 1996), 198–99, does not treat Procopius's views regarding Theodoric very thoroughly and fails to see the historian's bias against the Ostrogoth ruler.
- 83 See, *Vita Aviti* 1–4, 361–62 (*Acta Sanctorum quotquot tot urbe coluntur* [Brussels, 1643–1894], 3 June). Although this *vita* is a late source, it provides considerable useful information regarding the details of mobilization of the Visigothic army. See the discussion of this text by Rouche, *L'Aquitaine*, 46, 351, with the literature cited in the notes.

support themselves as well-equipped mounted troops in the tradition of the units that had been victorious in 451. Some Visigoths, however, perhaps the less affluent, were archers who fought on foot.⁸⁴

The Gallo-Roman expeditionary levies were mobilized in each of the *civitates* of Alaric's *regnum* and served under the count of the city. These levies generally were composed of Gallo-Romans, since the Visigoths constituted only a very small portion of the total population and a proportionally small segment of able-bodied men of military age.⁸⁵ In this context, it is important to emphasize that Gallo-Romans, both men and women, were required to support a militia man *in expeditione*, that is, beyond the borders of their home *civitas*, if they possessed a quantity of landed wealth. Later, this lower limit of landed wealth would be characterized in the *regnum Francorum* as a manse.⁸⁶ Wealthier subjects of the Visigothic king provided militia troops according to their means at the above-noted rate.⁸⁷ This system of military obligation resembled later imperial practice. The major difference was that the latter provided recruits for a standing army while the former provided forces on a campaign-by-campaign basis. The expeditionary militia troops raised by the Gallo-Romans went home to their farms after each campaign.⁸⁸

The locally mustered expeditionary forces were comprised overwhelmingly of militia men who lacked both horses and sophisticated military equipment. This was the result of the low level of the minimum wealth requirement. In fact,

84 Rouche, *L'Aquitaine*, 350–54. Regarding the initial grants of tax revenues and the later conversion of these into land holdings, see several works by Walter Goffart: *Barbarians and Romans, A.D. 418–584: The Techniques of Accommodation* (Princeton, 1980), 103–26; “After the Zwettl Conference: Comments on the ‘Techniques of Accommodation,’” in *Anerkennung und Integration*, ed. Herwig Wolfram and Andreas Schwarcz (Vienna, 1988), 73–85; “The Theme of ‘The Barbarian Invasions’ in Later Antique and Modern Historiography,” in *Das Reich und die Barbaren*, ed. Evangelos Chrysos and Andreas Schwarcz (Vienna, 1989), 87–107 (repr. in Walter Goffart, *Rome's Fall and After* [London, 1989], 111–32); and *Barbarian Tides: The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empire* (Philadelphia, 2006), 119–86, where Goffart effectively disposes of his critics.

85 Rouche, *L'Aquitaine*, 350–54.

86 Concerning these developments in the *regnum Francorum*, see Bachrach, *Early Carolingian Warfare*, 54–57; and Walter Goffart, “Frankish Military Duty and the Fate of Roman Taxation,” *EME* 16 (2008): 166–90.

87 The most famous case being that of Apollinaris, the son of Sidonius Apollinaris, who, according to Gregory of Tours (*Hist.* 2.37) fought accompanied by the levy from the Auvergne: *Maximus ibi tunc Arvernorum populus, qui cum Apollinare venerat, et plurimi qui erant ex senatoribus corruerunt.*

88 Rouche, *L'Aquitaine*, 350–54. Regarding Merovingian recruitment practices in later Roman perspective, see B. S. Bachrach, “Merovingian Mercenaries and Paid Soldiers in Imperial Perspective,” in *Mercenaries and Paid Men: The Mercenary Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. John France (Amsterdam, 2008), 167–92.

many of these militia men, often the landholder himself, served on campaign on the basis of his possession of the single manse that was sufficient to support such service. Indeed, the myth that Roman citizens were disarmed by the imperial authorities was ably shattered by Peter Brunt with special attention to Gaul and with a positive focus in regard to the use of civilian forces.⁸⁹ It is important that the Roman government deployed rather large numbers of civilian militia men for military purposes and especially for urban defense during the later empire. This tradition was operative in Gaul, as indicated in numerous instances. In 260, for example, the *cives* of Tours are recorded to have repulsed a Frankish attack.⁹⁰ Indeed, civilians, as shown at Autun in 270, could give a good account of themselves even against regular Roman troops.⁹¹ It is likely that the rescript of Valentinian III, which reflects even earlier edicts, had more or less institutionalized such civilian efforts.⁹²

Among these levies, at least some, and probably many, were archers of varying quality. It was well established that adult males throughout the empire and, therefore, obviously in Gaul were required to practice regularly with the bow and arrow. It was well recognized that preparing a civilian, who was to fight as a militia man, to engage the enemy at a distance with the bow and arrow was likely to be a more effective use of manpower than trying to train such a man to engage the enemy at close quarters with a spear or sword.⁹³ By contrast with these foot soldiers, a rather small minority of the men who served in these expeditionary forces were the household troops of the Gallo-Roman aristocrats. These men were well-armed and well-trained mounted troops and not inferior to their Visigothic counterparts.⁹⁴

89 Peter Brunt, "Did Imperial Rome Disarm Her Subjects?" *Phoenix* 29 (1975): 260–70.

90 Théodore Reinach, "Le premier siège entrepris par les Francs," *Revue historique* 43 (1890): 34–46, for a discussion of Eusebius, frag. 5; and John Drinkwater, *The Gallic Empire: Separatism and Continuity in the North-western Provinces of the Roman Empire, A.D. 260–274* (Stuttgart, 1987), 84–85.

91 Drinkwater, *Gallic Empire*, 37–38, 178.

92 See, e.g., *Nov. Val.* 5.2; 9.1; and the discussion by Bachrach, *Early Carolingian Warfare*, 52–53.

93 See Bachrach, *Early Carolingian Warfare*, 100–102, with the literature cited in the relevant notes.

94 Rouche, *L'Aquitaine*, 350–54.

The Frankish Army

Clovis's military forces were composed of a wide variety of groups drawn from many different institutional structures.⁹⁵ The core of his army was Clovis's military household or *obsequium*, and central to this group were the *antrustiones*, composed of Franks and others. These *presentales* probably amounted to several thousand troops, while other units of Clovis's *obsequium* served in garrisons and other strategic locations throughout his *regnum*. In addition, there were Franks, many of whom still held military lands, that is, *terra Salica*, which had been awarded by the Roman government to their ancestors two centuries earlier. Augmenting these elite troops were the military households of the magnates of the kingdom, Franks and Gallo-Romans alike. Further, there were elements in Clovis's army that were the institutional descendents of various later Roman units of regular troops and *laeti*. Finally, there were medium level landholders who owed expeditionary service.⁹⁶ In short, Clovis's army was not very different from that of Alaric II, as described above.

Campaign Strategy

It was Clovis's campaign strategy to cross the Loire and to move south of the river as rapidly as possible in order to "liberate" the fortress cities of Aquitania Prima and Secunda, from Visigothic control.⁹⁷ The Frankish king had reason to believe that he would be welcomed by disaffected Gallo-Romans of political and military importance in Aquitaine. These men were opposed to domination by the Visigoths for a wide variety of reasons, including religious differences.⁹⁸ In addition, Clovis probably believed that he could integrate the militia levies of these *civitates* into the Frankish army.⁹⁹ As mentioned earlier, Clovis's Burgundian allies were to act as a blocking force against a potential Ostrogothic

95 For the composition of both the Visigothic and Frankish armies at this time, see also Young's essay in this volume.

96 For the composition of the Frankish army at this time, see a series of studies by B. S. Bachrach: *Merovingian Military Organization*, 3–17; "Imperial Roots of Merovingian Military Organization," 25–31; and "Quelques observations," 689–703.

97 Although Greg. *Hist.* 2.37 is often characterized as depicting Clovis's campaign as a "crusade" (see, e.g., the clever rhetoric employed by Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 47), the evocation of the word "crusade," much less attributing it, even by inference, to Gregory, is fundamentally anachronistic and highly misleading. For the campaign tactics, see also Mathisen's essay on Vouillé in this volume.

98 Greg. *Hist.* 2.37.

99 The existence of such levies can be inferred from Greg. *Hist.* 2.37, where a Gallo-Roman contingent from the Auvergne fights on the side of Alaric.

relief army. If possible, they were to try to catch the Visigothic army in a pincer from the south.

Alaric's campaign strategy was reactive and, in fact, the contrapositive of Clovis's plan. Alaric's aim was to stop Clovis's advance as quickly as possible, that is, as far north as he could manage. Therefore, he ordered his troops, units drawn from throughout the *civitates* of Aquitaine and those *civitates* of the Auvergne that were under his *regnum*, to concentrate at Poitiers.¹⁰⁰ This fortress city was approximately 100 kilometers south of the Loire, where the river ran through the environs of Tours. The timing of Clovis's strategy and of Alaric's counterstrategy, however, probably precluded the possibility that Ostrogothic reinforcements could reach northern Aquitaine before the Visigoths and Franks would encounter each other on the field of battle.

Procopius, who evidences frequent hostility toward Theodoric, expends considerable effort to explain that the Ostrogothic ruler was an unreliable military ally. He contends that Theodoric rarely met his obligations and that he committed his troops to military operations only reluctantly and tardily. Procopius also suggests that Alaric wanted to wait for Ostrogothic reinforcements to arrive, but his restless troops threatened mutiny if he did not seek battle immediately. This confrontation between the king and his soldiers is unlikely to have occurred. It probably represents Procopius's efforts to show the foolishness of the Visigoths in going to war unprepared and the unreliability of Theodoric, who failed to send reinforcements in a timely manner.¹⁰¹

Simple awareness of geographical realities, however, makes clear that Theodoric's troops could not make a rendezvous with Alaric's army in the environs of Poitiers. Theodoric could only order the mobilization of his army after Alaric's request for aid reached him in the Ostrogothic capital at Ravenna. At this point, orders had to be issued and disseminated for mobilization. An Ostrogothic army, however rapidly mustered in northern Italy, probably at Milan or Pavia, then would have to travel approximately 750 kilometers over the Roman road system in order to reach Poitiers. This march probably would have to include passage through the high western alpine passes, which might not be fully open until the end of March. Bad weather in April could still cause difficulties for a large army marching through the Great Saint Bernard. In fact, the Ostrogothic army would have to travel more than twice the distance that the armies of Alaric and Clovis had to march in order to reach the environs of Poitiers.

Although Alaric's mobilization at Poitiers was sufficiently complete to move his army north, he still lacked Ostrogothic reinforcements. In addition, Clovis's

100 It is obvious from Greg. *Hist.* 2.37 that Alaric ordered his troops to concentrate at Poitiers.

101 Procop. *BG* 5.12.

forces already had crossed the Loire in the environs of Tours, unopposed, and were on the road to Poitiers. In fact, Clovis's army also had crossed the Vienne, despite the fact that recent rains had swollen the river and obscured the markings of the ford. This flooding problem was solved by Clovis's scouts, who followed the hallowed tradition of observing where wild animals crossed rivers and thus discovered where the ford was located. With the river to his back, Clovis moved toward Vouillé and established his camp.¹⁰² When Alaric received exact intelligence regarding Clovis's line of march, he ordered his army at Poitiers to break camp and march north to intercept the Frankish invaders.¹⁰³ The Visigothic king had decided that he would give battle as soon as possible in order to drive Clovis's forces out of Aquitaine.¹⁰⁴

Clovis surely knew from intelligence provided by disaffected Gallo-Romans that Alaric had ordered his army to muster at Poitiers. The rather early acquisition of such information probably accounts for Clovis's line of march to Tours and then south from the region of Tours in the direction of Poitiers.¹⁰⁵ With this information in hand, the Frankish king dispatched scouts to obtain fresh intelligence regarding the movements of Alaric's force. When the order was issued to the Visigothic army to march north, probably on the day before the battle, Clovis's scouts sent a signal that night to provide this intelligence to Frankish headquarters.¹⁰⁶ These spies set a huge fire not far from the Church of

102 Greg. *Hist.* 2.37 obtained some information regarding the problem faced at the ford of the Vienne and created a story to demonstrate God's intervention to help Clovis's army. For some general observations regarding Gregory's understanding of military matters, see B. S. Bachrach, "Gregory of Tours as a Military Historian," in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and I. N. Wood (Leiden, 2002), 351–63.

103 An inference necessitated by the fact that Vouillé is located northwest of Poitiers; see Mathisen's essay on Vouillé in this volume.

104 There has been extensive discussion regarding the location of the battle. For what I regard to be the most sound treatment of the problem, see Mathisen's essay on Vouillé in this volume.

105 For Clovis's line of march passing in the region of Tours, see Greg. *Hist.* 2.37, where some of the troops forage on Saint Martin's lands and are punished by the king for their transgressions.

106 Fires were a very important means of sending military signals during the late antique period. This included night signals when flames could be seen and day signals when smoke could be seen. See, Vegetius, *De re Militari* 3.5.17–19. Regarding the knowledge and importance of Vegetius's work during the early Middle Ages, see three studies by B. S. Bachrach: "The Practical Use of Vegetius: *De Re Militari* during the Early Middle Ages," *Historian* 47 (1985): 239–55; and reprinted with the same pagination in B. S. Bachrach, *Warfare and Military Organization in Pre-Crusade Europe* (London, 2002); "Gregory of Tours, Vegetius, and the Study of War," in *Famille, violence et christianisation au Moyen Âge: Mélanges offerts à Michel Rouche*, ed. Martin Aurell and Thomas Deswarte (Paris, 2005), 299–308; and "'A Lying Legacy' Revisited: The Abels-Morillo Defense of Discontinuity," *Journal of Medieval Military History* 5 (2007): 154–93.

Saint Hilaire, located in the western quadrant of Poitiers.¹⁰⁷ Obviously, the cords of firewood traditionally stored near monasteries for heating the buildings and cooking the food would have provided an easily available source of fuel for Clovis's agents.¹⁰⁸

Clovis's encampment was located on the left bank of the Vienne in the environs of Vouillé, and the distance between Poitiers and the battlefield was about 14 kilometers. From a perch in a tree only ten meters in height, a lookout stationed ten kilometers north of Poitiers easily could see the walls of the city on the horizon. An immense fire or a column of smoke, of the type said by Gregory of Tours to have risen from Saint Hilaire, would have risen more than fifty meters in the air and been seen for several dozen of kilometers in every direction.¹⁰⁹ In short, as a result of this signal, Clovis's army was well positioned to meet Alaric's force on a field of battle of its own choice. This, of course, is of great importance for any army composed largely of foot soldiers fighting in a phalanx formation when faced with a heavily armed mounted force.¹¹⁰

The Battle of Vouillé

Although there are no surviving eyewitness accounts of the battle, tradition has it that the encounter opened with an exchange of missiles at a distance, probably archery but perhaps spears, as well.¹¹¹ This is plausible because both Frankish and Visigothic forces, as described above, are known to have had complements of archers. In addition, it was standard tactical procedure to begin battle at a distance when such assets were available.¹¹² After this exchange of missiles, it is

107 Regarding the topography of Poitiers and its environs, see Dietrich Claude, *Topographie und Verfassung der Städte Bourges und Poitiers bis in das 11. Jahrhundert*, Historische Studien 380 (Lübeck/Hamburg, 1960), 75–93.

108 In a flourish of religious topology, Gregory of Tours (*Hist.* 2.37), who obviously knew something about the story of the signal fire, describes a fire in the sky as a sign from Saint Hilary of Poitiers that presaged Clovis's victory. It should be noted, in this context, that the story is told in much the same way by Fortunatus, *Liber de virtutibus Sancti Hilarii* 7.20 (9) (*Venanti Honori Clementiani Fortunati, Opera Pedestria*, ed. Bruno Krusch in MGH AA, new ed. [Berlin, 1961]).

109 With regard to sight lines to the horizon, see B. S. Bachrach, "On the Origins of William the Conqueror's Horse Transports," *Technology and Culture* 26 (1985): 505–31; and reprinted with the same pagination in B. S. Bachrach, *Warfare and Military Organization in Pre-Crusade Europe* (London, 2002), 530n66.

110 These tactical matters are discussed in detail by Bachrach, *Early Carolingian Warfare*, 178–90; and Kelly DeVries, *Infantry Warfare in the Early Fourteenth Century: Discipline, Tactics, and Technology* (Woodbridge UK, 1996).

111 This is what Greg. *Hist.* 2.37, means when he writes *confligentibus his eminus, resistent comminus illi*. The *eminus* terminology is obvious here.

112 Bachrach, *Early Carolingian Warfare*, 196–97.

generally agreed that the Visigothic mounted troops charged the Frankish phalanx of foot soldiers. These were the normal tactics traditionally employed by each group.¹¹³ Indeed, the successful mounted charge by the Visigoths at Châlons was still very well remembered in the mid-6th century.¹¹⁴ The phalanx of Gallo-Roman and Frankish foot soldiers, however, was not broken by the enemy charge, as also would be the case more than two centuries later at Poitiers.¹¹⁵

We have no way of knowing how many charges the Visigothic mounted forces executed or whether the troops drawn from the military households of the Gallo-Roman magnates participated in these attacks. It is clear, however, that Alaric's troops attempted at least one feigned retreat to lure Clovis's foot soldiers from their positions. This effort failed.¹¹⁶ In what would be the decisive offensive action of the battle, Clovis led his comparatively small force of mounted troops, which had been held in reserve, in a flanking movement, against the position where Alaric had stationed himself with his body guards. The Visigothic king was killed in this assault, and tradition has it that Clovis was directly responsible for Alaric's death.¹¹⁷ However, more importantly, the death of Alaric, and very probably the loss of his standard at this time, resulted in the disorderly retreat of the entire Visigothic army.¹¹⁸

It is in this phase of the battle that Clovis's victory at Vouillé differs markedly from the efforts of Aëtius at Châlons and Charles Martel at Poitiers.

113 Greg. *Hist.* 2.37, as the *confligentibus* terminology is traditionally interpreted. On the meaning of these terms see, e.g., Rouche, *Clovis*, 308–9.

114 See, e.g., Jordanes, *Getica* 38–40.

115 Greg. *Hist.* 2.37, as the terminology *resistunt comminus* is generally understood.

116 Greg. *Hist.* 2.37 observes *secundum consuetudinem Gothi terga vertissent*. Then, he intentionally misrepresents this well-known tactic of the feigned retreat to suggest that the Visigothic maneuver was, in fact, a real retreat and it was the *consuetudo* of the Goths to flee from battle. Information regarding feigned retreat tactics was thoroughly disseminated at this time, and Gregory himself (*Hist.* 9.31) describes the Visigoths as using it. In short, it was the *consuetudo* of the Visigoths to use the feigned retreat tactic, not to run away. Regarding the feigned retreat, see, e.g., Bachrach, *Early Carolingian Warfare*, 126–27, 129–31, 198–99. Halsall, *Warfare and Society*, 200, treats the sources as plain text and fails to understand that the Visigoths executed a feigned retreat.

117 Greg. *Hist.* 2.37. What is relevant here is that two of Alaric's bodyguards are reported almost to have killed Clovis but that the Frankish king was saved by the speed of his horse and the high quality of his body armor. It is noteworthy that Gregory does not explicitly state that God saved Clovis, in this context, and provides a “realistic” explanation. With regard to Clovis's mounted troops, Rouche, *Clovis*, 308, suggests that they were Armoricans. Regarding these, see Bachrach, “Origin of Armorican Chivalry,” 166–71.

118 Greg. *Hist.* 2.37 makes a hash of the sequence of this part of the battle by trying to conflate the Visigothic use of the feigned retreat tactic and their general retreat from the battlefield.

Clovis's forces are indicated to have pursued the fleeing elements of Alaric's army. Not only was the Frankish army left in possession of the battlefield, but it is reported to have accomplished a great slaughter of the enemy.¹¹⁹ The massive losses suffered by the levies of Auvergne were remembered some four score years later.¹²⁰ These losses serve to epitomize the success of Clovis's pursuit, which probably had a no less devastating effect upon the largely Gallo-Roman foot soldiers who had been levied from the other *civitates*. Indeed, large numbers of prisoners also were taken.¹²¹ Subsequent memories of this engagement, e.g., the remarks of the poet Fortunatus, a contemporary of Gregory of Tours, are interpreted to refer to piles of corpses left on the battlefield at Vouillé.¹²² It is to be emphasized in this context that both professional military men and historians recognize that in the course of a headlong retreat or rout under the pressure of pursuit a defeated army generally suffers most of its casualties.¹²³

Postbattle Strategy

Clovis followed up this victory in the field by having elements of his army under the command of his son Theuderic move south quickly in order to take the Gothic-ruled cities of the Auvergne, while other elements of the Frankish army, some under Clovis's direct command, took most of the fortress cities of Aquitania Prima and Aquitania Secunda. When the king himself ended the campaigning season, he moved into winter quarters at the fortress city of Bordeaux.¹²⁴ The Visigothic capital at Toulouse in Narbonensis Prima was captured along with the royal treasure. Clovis's Burgundian allies, who played no role at Vouillé, took Narbonne. However, sieges by combined Burgundian and Frankish forces at both Carcassonne and Arles failed, as a result of the intervention by an army sent by Theudoric the Ostrogoth from Italy. Shortly thereafter, the Ostrogoths recaptured both Narbonne and Toulouse.¹²⁵ In fact,

119 Greg. *Hist.* 2.37.

120 Greg. *Hist.* 2.37.

121 Although Alaric's army was soundly defeated, not everyone was killed or even wounded. See, e.g., *Vita Aviti* 4, which indicates that the future holy man, who served in Alaric's army at Vouillé as a Gallo-Roman member of the select levy from Périgord, was taken prisoner. *Vita Eptadii presbyteri Cervidunensis* 8–12 in MGH SRM, ed. Bruno Krusch (Hannover, 1896) provides additional information regarding prisoners. Rouche, *Clovis*, 308–14, discusses several additional sources that deal with casualties and prisoners.

122 Fortunatus, *Liber de Virtutibus Sancti Hilarii* 7.20 (9); Shanzer's essay in this volume.

123 Bachrach, *Early Carolingian Warfare*, 195–96.

124 Greg. *Hist.* 2.37 not only exaggerates the extent of Clovis's conquests, but fails to make clear that some of his conquests were, in fact, not permanent.

125 See Greg. *Hist.* 2.37.

the entire Mediterranean coast of Gaul either remained in Gothic possession or was restored to the Goths.¹²⁶

When Clovis returned to Tours in spring 508, he celebrated the triumph of a Roman general. As promised, Emperor Anastasius awarded Clovis the title of *patricius*, made him a “consul,” whether regular or honorary is not clear, and provided him with the proper documentation to serve as an imperial governor in southern Gaul. The emperor also probably regularized within the structure of the imperial administration Clovis’s *de facto* status as ruler in the northern half of Gaul. Four years later Clovis exercised the authority delegated to him by the emperor and convoked the first of what were to be several church councils to meet under royal direction at the city of Orléans. It is important to emphasize that this council in 511 included not only representatives of the cities that Clovis had liberated from the so-called Arian yoke in 507. Bishops from the north also attended, and the assembled prelates recognized that they acted in response to a set of *tituli* that Clovis submitted for their approval.¹²⁷

Was Vouillé a Decisive Battle?

When one compares the Battle of Vouillé with the criteria employed by military theorists such as Clausewitz, it is clear that Clovis won a decisive victory. King Alaric was killed, his army was slaughtered and was unable to withstand the further conquest of Aquitaine. Visigothic rule in Aquitaine was destroyed. In the short-term aftermath of the battle, much of the region was integrated into the *regnum Francorum*. Clovis received imperial recognition of his conquests. He celebrated a military triumph. In addition, he was elevated to the status of an imperial official, which made him the obvious ruler of not only the greater part southwestern Gaul but also the north. He was the legitimate ruler not only over Franks but also over Gallo-Romans.

In the longer term also, the victory at Vouillé was decisive. For more than a century after the battle, no serious military operations were undertaken against Frankish Aquitaine by the Visigoths, who held on to Septimania and ruled in Spain. Whatever efforts were taken against Frankish rule, by and large, were unsuccessful. More often than not, the good working relationship that Clovis had established with the imperial authorities continued to be enjoyed by his successors. Various of Clovis’s descendants continued to recognize the *ditio* of the government in Constantinople, and this was evidenced on the royal coinage,

126 See Samuel Dill, *Roman Society in Gaul in the Merovingian Age* (London, 1926), 102; who, in emphasizing this matter, is followed by Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 48–49.

127 For discussion, see Halfond’s essay in this volume.

which followed the imperial gold standard down to ca. 570.¹²⁸ Some Frankish kings provided troops in support of imperial military operations in Italy, and others connived with the emperor to install a Byzantine puppet ruler in the south.¹²⁹ The Frankish victory at Vouillé therefore had a continuing significance that decisively shaped the course of the future of western Europe.

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Vouillé, Voulon, and the Location of the Campus Vogladensis

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The hostilities between the Visigoths and Franks culminated in 507 in one of the most pivotal battles of western Late Antiquity when Clovis's and his Franks met Alaric II and the Visigoths near Poitiers. Alaric was killed and Clovis then occupied most of Visigothic Aquitania.¹ During the past 400 years plus, identifying the exact location of the battle has been an armchair sport of professional and amateur geographers and historians.

Sources for the Battle of Voglada

Ancient sources place the battle outside Poitiers at a place called "Voglada" or the "Campus Vogladensis." The earliest date from the mid- to late 6th century. The so-called Chronicle of Saragossa,² a collection of marginal notations dating

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- 1 The battle is very tightly dated. The so-called Chronicle of Saragossa places it specifically in 507 (MGH AA 11.221). This date is confirmed by other sources. A terminus post quem of September 11, 506, is provided by the date of the Council of Agde. In addition, Greg. *Hist.* 2.37 specifically states, *Regnavit autem Alaricus viginti duos annos*. Given that Alaric became king in December of 484, 22 years of reigning would have been completed by December 506, and a battle in 507 would have occurred when Alaric had 22 complete years of rule. Gregory's date is confirmed by the enabling documents of the *Breviarium*, dated to early 506. The *subscriptio Aniani* in one version is dated *anno XXII eo regnante* ("during [Alaric's] 22nd year") and in the other version *anno XXII domni nostri Alarici regis* ("in the 22nd year of our lord King Alaric"); the *praescriptio Breviarii* was issued *anno XXII regnante domino Alarico rege* ("in the 22nd year of the reign of the lord King Alaric"); and the *Commonitorium Alarici* is dated *Dat. III non. Feb. anno XXII Alarici regis* ("given in the 22nd year of King Alaric") (ed. T. Mommsen, P. M. Meyer, and P. Krüger, *Theodosiani libri XVI*, vol. 1.1 (Berlin, 1905), xxxii–xxxiii).
 - 2 MGH AA 11.221. These notations may come from a lost chronicle of Maximus of Saragossa: Isidore of Seville reports (*Vir. ill.* 65[46]): *Maximus Caesaraugustanae civitatis episcopus multa versu prosaque componere dicitur. scripsit et brevi stilo historiolas de iis quae temporibus Gothorum in Spaniis acta sunt historico et composito sermone. sed et multa alia scribere dicitur quae necdum legi*. Victor's entry for 507 reads (*ibid.*, 194), *Venantio et Celere cons. Populos Alexandrinos et totius Aegypti omnes simul pusillos et magnos . . . his eventibus angelus in viri specie quibusdam ex populo apparuit*.

between 450 and 568 that were incorporated into a manuscript of the chronicles of Victor of Tonnena and John of Biclara, reports, "At this time a battle between the Goths and Franks occurred at Voglada. King Alaric was killed by the Franks in the battle. The kingdom of Toulouse was destroyed."³ And in the 580 s, Gregory of Tours reported that the Visigoths were defeated "on the field of Voglada at the tenth milestone from the city of Poitiers."⁴ Two other non-Gallic sources mention the battle, but are not helpful regarding its location. The Byzantine historian Procopius, writing in the mid-6th century, gives in fact the earliest account of the battle, but mistakenly places it not at Poitiers, but at Carcasso, far to the south.⁵ And, in Spain in the mid-7th century, Isidore of Seville placed the battle only "in the region of the city of Poitiers."⁶

Later Gallic sources essentially repeat Gregory with a few twists. Fredegarius, in the mid-7th century, has the battle *in campania Vogladensis*.⁷ The *Liber historiae Francorum*, written circa the early 8th century, adds that the battle

- 3 *Chron. Caesaraug.* s.a. 507 (MGH AA 11.222): *His diebus pugna Gotthorum et Francorum Voglada facta. Alaricus rex in proelio a Francis interfectus est: regnum Tolosanum destructum est.* See also Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann and Roger Collins, eds., *Victoris Tunnunensis Chronicon: cum reliquiis ex Consularibus Caesaraugustanis et Iohannis Biclaensis Chronicon* (Turnhout, 2001).
- 4 *Greg. Hist.* 2.37: *Chlodoveus autem rex cum Alarico rege Gotthorum in campo Vogladensi* [alternative readings: *Vogladense/Bodadense/Vocladinse*] *decimo ab urbe Pectava miliario*; *Greg. Hist.* 2.38: *subsequently, igitur ab Anastasio imperatore codicillos de consolato accepit, et in basilica beati Martini tunica blatea indutus et clamide, inponens vertice diademam. tunc ascenso equite, aurum argentumque in itinere illo, quod inter portam atque [ms. atriū] ecclesiam civitatis est, praesentibus populis manu propria spargens, voluntate benignissima erogavit, et ab ea die tamquam consul aut augustus est vocitatus. egressus autem a Toronus, Parisiis venit ibique cathedram regni constituit.*
- 5 *Procop. Wars* 5.7.35.
- 6 *Isid. Hist. Goth.* (MGH AA 11.281–2): *Alaricus filius eius apud Tolosensem urbem princeps Gotthorum constituitur*, followed by version 1: *Qui cum a pueritia vitam in otio et convivio peregisset, tandem provocatus a Francis in regione Pictavensis urbis proelio inito extinguitur eoque interfecto regnum Tolosanum occupantibus Francis destruitur* and version 2: *Adversus quem Fluduicus Francorum princeps Galliae, regnum affectans Burgundionibus sibi auxiliantibus, bellum movit fuscisque Gotthorum copiis ipsum postremum regem apud Pictavis superatum interfecit.*
- 7 *Fredegarius, Chron.* 2.58 (MGH SRM 2.83): *Chlodoveus adversus Alaricum arma commovit, quem in campania Voglanensem decimo ab urbe Pectava miliario interfecit*; *Chron.* 3.24 (MGH SRM 2.102): *Igitur Alaricus rex Gotthorum cum amicitia fraudulenter cum Chlodoveo inisset, quod Clodoveus, discurrente Paterno legato suo, cernens, adversum Alarico arma commovit et in campania Voglavensim decimo ab urbe Pectava miliario Alarico interfecit, et plura manu Gotthorum trucidata, regnum maius a mare Terreno per Ligere fluvio et montes Pereneos usque Ocianum mare a Chlodoveo occupatum est. Theusaurus Alarici a Tholosa auferens, secum Parisius duxit. multi muneribus ecclesia sancti Martini et sancti Hilariae ditavit, quorum fultus auxilio haec cernitur implisse*; *Chron.* 3.28 (SRM 2.103) [Clovis] *obiit post Voglensim bellum anno 5.*



Fig. 1: Poitiers and its environs. Source: R. W. Mathisen.

occurred “above the Clain River.”⁸ Hincmar of Reims circa 875 put the battle *in campo Moglotense* and *super fluvium Glinno*.⁹ And the *Vita Maxentii*, the life of the hermit and abbot Maxentius, whose *liber vitae* was consulted by Gregory of Tours¹⁰ and whose extant *vita* is dated variously to the 6th and 8th century or later, places the battle at a *villam vocabulo Vocludum*,¹¹ near modern Saint-Maixent-l’Ecole far to the west-southwest of Poitiers.

8 LHF 17 (MGH SRM 2.269): *In campo Vogladinse super fluvium Clinno miliario decimo ab urbe Pectava*. See J. Descroix, “Sur la bataille dite de Vouillé,” *Annales Université Poitiers* (1950–51): 91–97.

9 *Vita Remigii* 19 (SRM 3.311): *Movit autem rex cunctum exercitum suum de populo Francorum versus Pictavis civitatem—ibi enim tunc Alaricus rex Gothorum commorabatur—et sic per pagum turonicum pergens et reverentiam beato Martino atque sancto Hilario exhibens, sicut locis suis lector inveniet, cum Alarico rege Gothorum in campo Moglotinse/ Moglotim/Mogotense/Modotinse super fluvium Glinno miliario decimo ab urbe Pictavis bellum conseruit. illisque inter se compugnantibus, Gothi cum rege suo nimis collisi terga verterunt. Hluodiwicus sicut solebat victor extitit. cumque Alaricum interficeret, duo Gothi cum contis eum ex adverso in latera fuerunt, sed propter loricae qua indutus erat ledere nequiverunt.*

10 Greg. *Hist.* 2.37: *Multasque et alias virtutes operatus est, quas si quis diligenter inquireret, librum vitae illius legens, cuncta reperiet.*

11 *Vita Maxentii* 11 (AASS June 5.170 ff.): *Nam eo tempore contigit ut Franci cum Gothis conflictu bellico advenirent, praecedente eos Chlodovæo rege. cum autem monasterio propinquassent, in quo S. Maxentius pastor habebatur egregius, et venissent in villam vocabulo Vocludum, instinctu diaboli cogitare cœperunt, ut idem monasterium debellare deberent.*



Fig. 2: The nineteenth-century preference for Vouillé as the battle site is depicted in an engraving by C.-N. Cochin entitled “Bataille de Vouillé, mort d’Alaric.” Source: M. Bouquet, ed., *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France* (Paris: Welter, 1869), vol.1, frontispiece.

Suggestions for the Location of Voglada

As early as the 16th century, when Civaux was suggested,¹² scholarly controversy began to rage over the actual site of the battle. Since then, scholars have pored over the primary sources looking for clues. Under ordinary circumstances, the late and derivative sources would be dismissed out of hand by serious scholars, but in the case of the Battle of Voglada, some scholars have been so desperate to find any additional elucidation that they have thrown caution to the winds and gone bottom-feeding on the detritus of later centuries. At the same time, others have tried to create geographical reconstructions of the movements of the armies, often based on the premise, “What would I have done if I’d been there.” The territory around Poitiers is spattered with suggested sites of the battle. Proposed sites include Champagné-Saint-Hilaire, Chatel-Achard, Château-Larcher near Vivonne, Saint-Cyr,¹³ Vouillé, and Voulon.¹⁴ After a vogue for

12 Francois Chamard, “La victoire de Clovis en Poitou et les legendes de Saint Maixent,” *RQH* 83 (1883): 5–35 at 15; also J. Duguet, “Encore la bataille de 507,” *Le Pays chavinois* 11.16 (1977): 22–25.

13 Auguste-François Lièvre, “Le lieu de rencontre des Francs et des Wisigoths, sur les bords du Clain en 507,” *RH* 66 (1898): 90–104, took Hincmar at his word that the battle

Voulon, south of Poitiers, during much of the 19th century,¹⁵ Vouillé, to the northwest, became the preferred location of most modern scholars following the work of Longnon in 1878.¹⁶ But there continued to be dissenters, both in the late 19th century¹⁷ and again, beginning with Gerberding in 1987, followed by Chevallier, Wood, and Becher, arguing for Voulon.¹⁸ Most other recent studies that mention the battle accept Vouillé as the site of the battle, though it is unclear whether their authors always even knew there was any doubt about the location.¹⁹

occurred in *campo Moglotensi*, which he identified as Moussais, near Saint-Cyr, but *Moglotensi* is surely just a bad reading of *Vogladensis* (see G. Kurth, "La bataille de Vouillé en 507," *RQH* 64 [1898]: 175–76). Note also idem, "Du lieu où Clovis défit Alaric, en 507," *Bulletin de la Société académique d'agriculture, belles-lettres, sciences, et arts de Poitiers* 181 (July 1873): 121–49. In addition, L. Bourgeois, ed. *Wisigoths et Francs autour de la bataille de Vouillé (507)* (Saint-Germain-en-Laye: Association française d'archéologie mérovingienne, 2010), does not contain any contributions dealing with the Battle of Vouillé.

- 14 See, e.g., Jacques Pineau, *Lusignan, Vivone, Couhé, Château-Larcher; mystère de leur histoire* (Poitiers, 1977); and H. Le Roux, "Recherches sur le lieu de la victoire de Clovis sur les Wisigoths en 507," *Bulletin de la Société des antiquaires de l'Ouest et des Musées de Poitiers* 5 (1993): 177–98.
- 15 See, e.g., Antoine René Hyacinthe Thibaudau, *Abrege de l'Histoire de Poitou* (Paris, 1782).
- 16 Auguste Longnon, *Géographie de la Gaul au VIe siècle* (Paris, 1878), 576–87; followed by Kurth, "Bataille de Vouillé," 180: "Vogladum est bien Vouillé"; also MGH SRM 1.1.2 p. 87; Alfred Richard, "La Bataille de Vouillé: Réponse au Mémoire de M. Lièvre," *Bulletin mensuel de la Faculté des lettres de Poitiers* (1888): 62–66; M. A. Richard, *La bataille de Vouillé en 507* (Poitiers, 1898); Jean-Médéric Tournier-Aumont, *Les quatre épisodes de la bataille de Vouillé* (Poitiers, 1926). Also called "Vouglé" by English writers: see Samuel Dill, *Roman Society in Gaul in the Merovingian Age* (London, 1926; repr. New York, 1970), 93–100.
- 17 M. Lecoindre, "La bataille de 507 entre Clovis et Alaric," *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de l'Ouest* 3 ser. 4 (1916–18): 423–56.
- 18 R. A. Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum* (Oxford, 1987), 41; also B. Chevallier, *Clovis, un roi européen* (Paris, 1996), 221 (following Lecoindre); I. N. Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751* (London, 1994), 46: "more probably Voulon"; idem, "Die Franken und ihr Erbe—"Translatio Imperii," in *Die Franken Wegbereiter Europas: Vor 1500 Jahren: König Chlodwig und seine Erben* (Mainz: von Zabern, 1996), 358–64 at 360. Recently, however, Wood has temporized, noting, "there is a conflict of opinion whether this battle took place at Vouillé or Voulon"; D. R. Shanzer and I. N. Wood, eds., *Avitus of Vienne: Selected Letters and Prose* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002), 651n2. More recently, Matthias Becher, *Chlodwig I: Der Aufstieg der Merowinger und das Ende der antiken Welt* (Munich: Beck, 2011), 229, also favored Voulon, albeit without discussion.
- 19 Inter alios, James, *Franks*, 86: "outside Poitiers, at Vouillé," in *Goths and Romans, 332–489*, ed. P. Heather (Oxford, 1991), 315; Yitzhak Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul, A.D. 481–751* (Leiden, 1995), 88; Halsall, "Childeric," 119; Wolfram, *Goths*, 193: "at Vouillé near Poitiers"; Vouillé: W. Pohl, "Introduction: The Empire and the Integration of Barbarians," in *Kingdoms of the Empire*, ed. W. Pohl

Linguistic Arguments

Attention thus has focused on Vouillé and Voulon. Both places not only begin with a “Vo-” sound that could have derived from “Voglada,” but also, as will be seen, meet certain topographical desiderata. So let us focus on the arguments for and against these two places. The linguistic evidence favors Vouillé. Linguists have argued that modern “Vouillé,” known as of the late 11th century as “Volliacum,” can easily be derived from ancient “Voglada” or “Vogladensis.”²⁰ No such argument has been made for Voulon, which, indeed, is not attested as even existing under any known name in the medieval period.

Geographical arguments have been made on the basis of Gregory’s statement that Voglada was located “at the tenth milestone from the city of Poitiers,” implying that it was ten Roman miles down some Roman road leaving Poitiers. On a direct line, Voulon is 18.6 Roman miles (27.5 km) south of Poitiers, and Vouillé is 10.6 Roman miles (15.7) north of the city.²¹ Given that Roman roads generally ran straight, these figures would approximate—or perhaps be just a bit more than—the distance as measured on a road. This factor would seem strongly to favor Vouillé.

The most obvious argument in favor of Voulon, on the other hand, is the mid-7th-century report of the *LHF* that the battle site was located *super fluvium Clinno* (“above the Clain River”). If this is understood to mean “on the Clain River,” and not “near the Clain River,” then Vouillé would seem to be ruled out, for it is several miles up the Auxance, a tributary that flows into the Clain,²²

(Leiden, 1997), 2, and index, 230 (dated to 508); W. Pohl and H. Reimitz, eds. *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800* (Leiden, 1998), 124, 195, 258, 347; Bachrach, *Merovingian Military Organization*, 11, places the battle at Vouillé, “to the south of the city,” but also “on the Roman road to Nantes,” which ran north of the city, indicating that he has confused south and north; Thompson, *Goths in Spain*, 2, puts it at “the gently undulating plains around Vouillé, some 18 kilometers west of Poitiers.”

- 20 See, e.g., Kurth, “Bataille,” 179: “Vouillé, dérivé très régulièrement de Vogladum”; G. Monod, “Publications diverse,” *Revue historique* 67 (1898): 358–59 at 359: “Vocladum donne tres regulierement Vouille”; also Longnon, *Géographie*, 586. In addition, documents from 1095, 1252, and 1266 refer to modern Vouillé as “Volliacum” or “Volliaco,” although Kurth, “Bataille,” 178–79, argues that “Volliacum” is “la retraduction latine du roman Vouillé, dont, a cette époque, personne ne connaissait l’étymologie.” For the regular substitution of “-ll-” for “-gl-” (e.g., “brouille” from “brogliare”), see Pineau, *Lusignan*, passim.
- 21 According to the *Michelin Motoring Atlas: France* (London, 1996), no. 95. One Roman mile is equivalent to 4,854 feet (1,481 meters), or 0.92 English miles.
- 22 See Gerberding, *Rise*, 41, “The *LHF* author . . . added that *campo Vogladense* lay on the river Clain and this river runs no closer than nine miles. . . . It seems that we have been assigning the wrong modern name and location. . . . If we search the Clain . . . we come upon the town of Voulon, exactly ten Gaulish leagues from Poitiers.”



Fig. 3: The Auxance River as it passes through modern Vouillé. Photo by R. W. Mathisen.

whereas Voulon, it is argued, is on the Clain itself. Thus any argument in favor of Vouillé must explain why the *LHF* said the battle was on the Clain, not the Auxance, and any argument in favor of Voulon must explain why Voulon was not on the 10-mile marker from Poitiers.

Proponents of Voulon deal with the distance issue by suggesting that that the phrase *decimo ab urbe Pectava miliario* was using the term *miliarium* generically to refer to a “distance marker,” not specifically to a monument marking miles, and that the marker was measuring not Roman miles but Gallic leagues, a measurement often used in Gaul, especially in the late empire.²³ Speaking of the 350 s, for example, Ammianus commented “from the beginning of Gaul, distances are measured not in miles but in leagues,” and he noted that 14 leagues equaled 21 miles.²⁴ In this case, a league equaled 1.5 Roman miles, and arguments have made that the league could have other values as well.²⁵ During the Principate, milestones customarily were marked with a number representing Roman miles. But as of the 3rd century, many milestones

23 E.g., *ibid.*

24 Amm. 16.12.8: *et quoniam a loco, unde Romana promota sunt signa, ad usque vallum barbaricum quarta leuga signabatur et decima id est unum et viginti milia passuum*; also 15.11.17: *qui locus exordium est Galliarum exinde non millibus passibus sed leugis itinera metiuntur*. See also Isid. *Orig.* 15.16: *leuca finitur passibus mille quingentis*; Jerome, *In Joel* 3.18: *cum et Latini mille passus vocent, et Galli leucas et Persae parasangas, et rastas universa Germania*.

25 J. Dassié, “The Great Gallic League,” www.archaero.com/archaeo101.html.

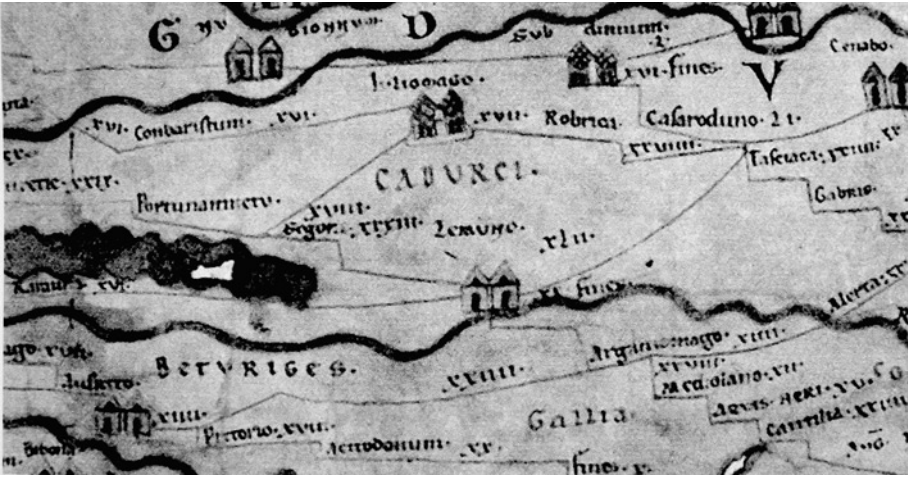


Fig. 4: In the Peutinger Table, roads from Poitiers (“Lemuno”) lead northeast to Tours (“Casaroduno”); west-northwest to Segona and thence to Nantes (“Portunamneto”); west-southwest to Rom (“Raurana”) and thence to Saintes; south across the Clain and then west to Limoges (“Ausrito”); and south and then east to Argenton (“Argentomago”). Source: K. Miller, *Weltkarte des Castorius genannt die peutingersche Tafel* (Ravensburg: Otto Maier, 1888), pl. 2.

from Gaul and Germany, called “Leugensteine” by German scholars, were marked in Gallic leagues.²⁶ In the cases where leagues are meant, the letter “L,” or the word *leugae*, usually is added to avoid confusion with miles. Several extant milestones from the area of Poitiers give distances only in leagues.²⁷ Two from Rauranum, modern Rom, give the distance to Poitiers as 16 leagues.²⁸ The Peutinger Table likewise gives the distance as 16 leagues, although the Antonine Itinerary gives it as *milia passum 21* (about 14 leagues). This line of reasoning would mean that Voglada was on a Roman road at the ten-leagues-from-Poitiers marker, and, if measured in leagues, the distance from Poitiers to Voulon is about 12 leagues, close enough to ten to bring Voulon back into play. But for this argument to hold (1) Gregory would have had to have used the term *milliaria* to refer to leagues, not to miles, and (2) Voulon must be on a Roman road. The only place we can test Gregory’s usage is where he mentions a Visigothic raid on Arles in the 570 s that reached “to the tenth milliaria from

26 E.g., P. Filtzinger, *Die militärische Besitznahme durch die Römer: Historischer Atlas von Baden-Württemberg* (Stuttgart, 1979), 3.3.17 ff.

27 Konrad Miller, *Itineraria romana: Römische Reisewege an der Hand der Tabula Peutingeriana* (Rome, 1964), 105.

28 *C(ivitas) P(ictionum) L(eugae) XVI Fin(ibus) L(eugae) XX* (Miller, *Itineraria* 1.8927); *C(ivitate) P(ictionum) L(imono) L(eugae) XVI F(inibus) L(eugae) XX* (ibid., 1.8928): “16 leagues from Poitiers, 20 leagues from Fines”; see CIL 12.2.655, 662.

the city” and resulted in the destruction of the *castrum* of Ugernum, modern Beaucaire.²⁹ If Gregory was speaking in miles, the Visigoths got to within 10 miles of Arles, but if he was speaking in leagues it would be 15 miles. Ugernum appears in the Peutinger Table as 9 leagues from Arles,³⁰ which translates to approximately 13.5 miles. If Gregory had been using leagues, the Visigoths would not have reached Beaucaire. In this case, therefore, Gregory must have been using miles to mean miles. But even if Gregory were using miles in this case, in the case of Voglada he may have simply reported the number on a milestone and ignored any “L” or *LEVGAE* that may have been there—he never uses the word *leugae* in any of his works. We therefore cannot eliminate the possibility that Gregory’s number refers to leagues.³¹

But even if Gregory were referring to leagues, Voulon still would have to be a place on a Roman road that was sufficiently major to have milestones. The 4th-century Peutinger Table shows several roads leaving Poitiers,³² going west to Nantes, north to Tours, east to Argenton, southwest to Saintes, and southeast to Limoges. In addition, the road to Nantes had two branches, a northern branch and a southern branch via Vouillé. Voulon, however, was not on a Roman road. No milestone survives with the name “Voglada” on it, but that is not in itself surprising. Roman milestones generally had two numbers on them, indicating the distances to larger urban centers in either direction. They usually did not name the place where they were located.

To help identify which road Gregory might be talking about, one can look at his very detailed account of the movements of the armies prior to the battle.³³ Gregory begins with Clovis heading south toward Poitiers, where Alaric was

29 Greg. *Hist.* 9.7: *Gotthi vero propter superioris anni devastationem, quam in Septimania regis Guntchramni exercitus fecit, in Arelatensem provinciam proruperunt, egeruntque praedas, et captivos abduxerunt usque ad decimum ab urbe milliarium. unum etiam castrum, Ugernum nomine, cum rebus atque habitatoribus desolantes, nullo resistente regressi sunt.*

30 Peutinger: VIII from Arles, XV to Nimes.

31 Which is to say nothing of the possibility that Gregory did know that some milestones were marked in leagues, and converted them into miles, a conversion rate that one must assume that he knew.

32 See Y. Loth, *Tracés d'itinéraires en Gaule romaine: milieu Ve siècle* (Dammarie-les-Lys, 1986), map 6, 53–54, 69–75; E.-R. Labande, *Histoire du Poitou, du Limousin et des Pays Charentais: Venée, Aunis, Saintonge, Angoumois* (Privat, 1976), map at 77; and L. Maurin, ed., *Villes et agglomérations urbaines antiques du sud-ouest de la Gaule: Histoire et archéologie* (Aix, 1992), 435.

33 Greg. *Hist.* 2.37: *Igitur Chlodovechus rex ait suis: “Valde moleste fero, quod hi Arianii partem teneant Galliarum. eamus cum dei adiutorio, et superatis redigamus terram in ditionem nostram.” cumque placuisset omnibus hic sermo, commoto exercitu Pictavis dirigit: ibi enim tunc Alaricus commorabatur. sed quoniam pars hostium per territorium Turonicum transibat, pro reverentia beati Martini dedit edictum, ut nullus de regione illa aliud quam herbarum alimenta aquamque praesumeret.*

camped. He notes that Clovis ordered his men not to loot the Touraine “because part of the enemy [*pars hostium*] was passing through the territory of Tours.” All translators assume that *pars hostium* refers to Clovis’s men: Dalton translates it as “part of [Clovis’s] troops,” Thorpe as “some of [Clovis’s] troops,” and Brehaut, making the best of a bad deal, as “part of [Clovis’s] host.”³⁴ But Gregory clearly means to say that Clovis issued his order “because part of the enemy was passing through the territory of Tours,” and he did not want any looting if fighting broke out. Clovis therefore began his attack by pushing part of the Visigothic army back from the territory of Tours. Indeed, the verb *transibat* suggests that these Visigoths may have been returning from an attack of their own on Frankish territory across the Loire or perhaps just retreating to be consolidated at Poitiers.³⁵

Clovis then presumably followed the Tours-Poitiers road south toward Poitiers.³⁶ Gregory then reports that Clovis had difficulty crossing the Vienne River because of flash-flooding. Only after a stag miraculously showed the location of a ford was Clovis able to cross to the west bank of the Vienne.³⁷ So, where did Clovis cross, and why did he have to ford the river? The Roman road follows the Vienne for some distance before crossing it, at either a bridge or a ford, just past modern Chatellerault. Why did Clovis not use the Roman crossing point. Was the bridge out? Had it been destroyed or fortified by retreating Visigoths? Or did he have some tactical reason for not using the normal crossing point? If Clovis planned to approach Poitiers from the east, he could have left the Roman road, continued south along the Vienne, and then followed his stag across. But the path of least resistance would suggest that he crossed to the left bank just before he got to the good Roman crossing point. Crossing here would have meant that he would not also have to cross the

34 E. Brehaut, trans., *History of the Franks by Gregory Bishop of Tours* (New York, 1916; repr., 1969), 45; O. M. Dalton, trans., *The History of the Franks by Gregory of Tours* (Oxford, 1927), 2.75; Lewis Thorpe, trans., *Gregory of Tours: The History of the Franks* (Penguin, 1974), 151.

35 As suggested, perhaps, by Fred. *Chron.* 3.24 (SRM 2.102): *Igitur Alaricus rex Gothorum cum amicitia fraudulenter cum Chlodoveo inisset* (“Therefore, Alaric, king of the Goths, fraudulently entered friendship with Clovis”).

36 A. Richard, “Les Légendes de Saint-Maixent et la victoire de Clovis en Poitou,” *Revue des questions historiques* 33 (1883): 609–23, however, suggests Clovis took a very roundabout path by continuing along the Loire to Port-Boulet and then taking the road from Angers to Poitiers via Vouillé (although in this model, he never crossed the Vienne, which Gregory clearly says he did).

37 Greg. *Hist.* 2.37: *Porro ille cum ad fluvium Vingennam cum exercitu advenisset, in quo loco eum transire deberet penitus ignorabat: intumuerat enim ab inundatione pluviarum. cumque illa nocte dominum deprecatus fuisset, ut ei vadum quo transire possit dignaretur ostendere, mane facto cerva mirae magnitudinis ante eos nutu dei flumen ingreditur, illaque vadante, populus quo transire possit, agnovit.*



Fig. 5: With the Le Clovis Hotel in the background, the sacred geese of Vouillé still keep watch; their cackling could not, however, save Alaric and his army. Photo by R. W. Mathisen.

Envigne River as he moved south. Then what? Before he could get to Poitiers, he had yet another river to cross, the Palu. Did he follow it upstream a bit to find a crossing point? This would have put him near Vouillé.

Gregory continues: “With the king arriving at Poitiers [*apud Pictavis*] while he waited at a distance in his tents, he saw a ball of fire exit the basilica of Saint Hilary [of Poitiers] and seem to settle over him.”³⁸ On the basis of this report,

38 Greg. *Hist.* 2.37: *Veniente autem rege apud Pictavis, dum eminus in tentoriis commoraretur, pharus ignea de basilica sancti Hilarii egressa, visa est ei tanquam super se advenire, scilicet ut lumine beati confessoris adjutus Hilarii, liberior haereticas acies, contra quas saepe idem sacerdos pro fide conflixerat, debellaret. contestatus est autem omni exercitui, ut nec ibi quidem aut in via aliquem exspoliarent, aut res cujusquam diriperent.*

one might want to identify Clovis's vision as some kind of solar phenomenon—similar to Constantine's cross—that seemed to be over the basilica and himself at the same time. But Venantius Fortunatus, who tells the same story in his *De virtutibus sancti Hilarii*, adds a crucial detail: "Clovis . . . merited seeing in the middle of the night a light coming over him from the basilica of the blessed man."³⁹ If the mysterious light appeared after sunset, it must have been something else. Ball lightning perhaps, or a meteoric fireball, or even, as has been suggested, a lamp-signal from a supporter in the church that the coast was clear for an attack.⁴⁰

And where was Clovis when he had his vision? The basilica of Hilary was located just outside the walls on the west side of the city, with a direct line of sight to Vouillé. During my own autopsy of the site in January 2001, I was unable to find a point high enough to give a view of Poitiers, but local observers report that there are several nearby high points near Vouillé, as at Villiers just north of Vouillé and Cissé just to the east, from which "one can distinguish the principal monuments of the city."⁴¹ But how well? A view from only 5 miles away presents only the barest outline of the modern city. From 10 miles away in antiquity, at night, one would not have been able to see much, even in moonlight. Only from closer up would there have been a clearer view. So one wonders whether Clovis was in fact camped a good deal closer than Vouillé to the city when he had his vision. Indeed, it even has been argued that Gregory's words *veniente autem rege apud Pictavis* mean that Clovis actually occupied the

39 Ven. Fort. *Liber de virtutibus s. Hilarii* 20–23 (MGH AA 4.2.9): *Quid etiam dignum referam de tam regali mysterio, quod ab ipso est in rege conlatum denique Chlodoveus dum contra haereticam gentem pugnaturus armatas acies commovisset, media nocte meruit de basilica beati viri lumen super se venientem adspicere, admonitus, ut festinanter sed non sine venerabilis loci oratione adversum hostem conflictaturus descenderet. quod ille diligenter observans et oratione occurrens tanta prosperitate altero pro se pugnaturus processit ad bellum, ut intra horam diei tertiam ultra humana vota sortiretur victoriam. ubi multitudo cadaverum colles ex se visa sit erexisse. ecce terribiliter formidanda prodigia et delectabiliter amplexanda miracula. parum illi fuit prosolatio regis signum ostendere luminis, nisi aperte monitus addidisset et vocis. similis quaedam contigit, Israelitici populi tempore, hujus causa virtutis. nam ibi columna ignis populum praecesserat, hic figura lampadis admonebat. Arianos debellat etiam mortuus—vellem nosse, quod fuerit tanti ardoris secretum mysterium, tam manifeste prolutum. sed quantum ipso inspirante videor agnoscere, non tacebo. nam contra haereticas acies sicut olim in corpore non cessavit spiritu dimicare: credebatur sibi contra Alaricum Arrianum iterum redire Constantium.* Chamard, "Victoire," 12–13, assumes from *sed non sine venerabilis loci oratione* that Clovis "a pu aller faire sa prière dans la basilique de saint-Hilaire" and that Alaric had abandoned the city.

40 See Richard, "Légendes," 615, supposedly suggested by Gregory's *pharos ignea* and accepted by Bachrach's essay in this volume; and Venantius's own description, as a *figura lampadis*, is consistent with Venantius's parallel to the pillar of fire that preceded the Israelites.

41 Pineau, *Lusignan*.

city before the battle, but a look at Gregory's use of place-names associated with the names of peoples-cum-cities shows that *apud* almost always means simply "in the neighborhood of."⁴² And as for Voulon, the same observers also report that that an intervening hill makes it impossible to see Poitiers from Voulon, which in any event also is nearly twice as far away.

Alaric, meanwhile, was making his own preparations, regarding which Gregory's account can be supplemented with Procopius, who reports (*Wars* 5.7.33–41),

The *Germanoi* [i.e., Franks], minimizing the power of Theoderic, moved their army against Alaric and the Visigoths. Learning this, as quickly as possible Alaric summoned Theoderic, who set out to his assistance with a great army. In the midst of this, when Alaric learned that the Germans were camped in the neighborhood of the city of Carcasso, he went to meet them and having made camp waited quietly. But because much time was used up blocking the enemy in this way and the land was being ravaged by the enemy, the Visigoths became angry. At length they began to heap many insults upon Alaric, reviling him on account of his fear of the enemy, and taunting him with the delay of his father-in-law. For they declared that they by themselves were a match for the enemy in battle and that even though unaided they would easily overcome the Germans in the war. For this reason Alaric was compelled to do battle with the enemy before the Ostrogoths had as yet arrived. And the Germans, gaining the upper hand in this engagement, killed most of the Visigoths and their ruler Alaric. Then they took possession of the greater part of Gaul and held it, and they laid siege to Carcasso with great enthusiasm, because they had learned that the royal treasure was there, which Alaric the elder in earlier times had taken as booty when he captured Rome.

Procopius's unfortunate slip in making Carcasso the site of the battle has needlessly vitiated his account, for, as can be seen, the Franks did in fact besiege Carcasso soon after the battle, and someone—either Procopius himself or a later copyist—inserted Carcasso also as the site of the primary battle, either because they believed it actually was the site of the battle or, more likely, because of confusion with the later mention of Carcasso. If one simply substitutes "Poitiers" for the first mention of Carcasso, it is clear that in Procopius's version

42 Alfred Richard, *Etude critique sur les origines du monastère de Saint-Maixent* (Saint-Maixent, 1880), 38; idem, "Légendes," 610, found two occasions in Gregory where "apud" means near, but there are in fact many more, using both the accusative and ablative: see *Hist.* 1.36: *apud Pictavos*; 1.39, 41: *apud Arvernos*, 2.40, 43: *apud Parisios*; 2.27: *apud Suessionas*; and 4.16: *apud Arvernus*. A similar purpose is accomplished by the accusative or ablative alone, e.g., *Hist.* 4.46: *Qui Turonis veniens . . . Pictavos accessit . . . sic Pictavos accedens*. When Gregory used "apud" to mean "in" a place, he included an additional qualifier, such as *civitatem*, *urbem*, or *vicum*; e.g., *Hist.* 1.24: *apud civitatem Romanam*; 1.29: *apud Bituricam urbem*; 1.32: *apud Arelatensem Galliarum urbem*; 1.43: *apud Condatensem dioecesis*; 2.3: *apud Albigensem Galliarum urbem*; 2.5: *apud Tungros oppidum*; 2.18: *apud Dolensem vicum*. And to indicate action within a city, Gregory even more specifically uses "infra"; e.g., *Hist.* 3.7: *infra Pictavensem urbem*.

Alaric's strategy was to block Clovis's advance south, a strategy that was working, for it required the Franks to ravage the countryside for supplies, thus counteracting Clovis's policy, mentioned in other sources, of not victimizing the local population.

Gregory's initial statement that Alaric was waiting at Poitiers, coupled with Clovis's apparent disinclination to approach the city directly, also suggests that Alaric still controlled the city. Clovis may have been circling west to outflank Alaric and cut him off from the south. Alaric could not allow this and thus sent troops west to block Clovis's advance, as suggested where Gregory's account picks up, with a story about the abbot Maxentius, "a *reclusus* in the territory of Poitiers."⁴³ A *cuneus hostium* ("band of the enemy"), arrived and Maxentius approached them to ask for peace. One of the soldiers drew his sword, as if to cut off Maxentius's head, but his hand became paralyzed and the sword fell to the ground. The soldier begged for mercy, and Maxentius restored his hand.

This account presents several problems of interpretation. First of all, who were the enemy soldiers—Franks or Visigoths?⁴⁴ From Gregory's perspective, of course, any *hostes* would have been Visigoths. But from Maxentius's perspective, it has been argued, the *hostes* would have been Franks because Maxentius's monastery was located in the Visigothic kingdom.⁴⁵ But did Gregory really expect his audience to understand this subtle difference of perspective; indeed, did Gregory expect that Maxentius would have seen the Arian Visigoths as *amici* and the Franks as *hostes*? Given that at the beginning of this same paragraph Gregory already referred to the Visigoths as *hostes*,⁴⁶ one probably should

43 Greg. *Hist.* 2.37: *Erat autem in his diebus vir laudabilis sanctitatis Maxentius abbas, reclausus in monasterio suo ob dei timorem infra terminum Pictavensem. cuius monasterii nomen lectioni non indidimus, quia locus ille usque hodie cellula sancti Maxentii vocatur. cuius monachi cum hostium cuneum unum ad monasterium cernerent propinquare, abbatem exorant, ut de cellula sua egrederetur ad exorandum eos. illoque demorante, hi timore percussi, eum aperto ostio producunt de cellula sua. at ille in occursum hostium, quasi pacem rogaturus, pergit intrepidus. unus autem ex his evaginato gladio, ut caput eius libraret, manus ad aurem erecta dirigit, gladiusque retrorsum ruit. at ipse ad pedes beati viri veniam deposcens sternitur. quod videntes reliqui, cum timore maximo ad exercitum redierunt, timentes ne et ipsi pariter interirent. huius vero brachium beatus confessor cum oleo benedicto contrectans, imposito signo crucis restituit sanum: ejusque obtentu monasterium permansit illaesum. multasque et alias virtutes operatus est, quas si quis diligenter inquiret, librum vitae illius legens, cuncta reperiet.*

44 All three translators equivocate: Brehaut, 46: "his monks saw a division of the host approaching the monastery"; Dalton, 77: "a dense body of soldiers"; Thorpe, 153 "a squadron of troops."

45 Chamard, "Victoire."

46 Greg. *Hist.* 2.37: *Sed quoniam pars hostium per territorium Turoicum transibat.*

suppose that by *hostes* Gregory meant Visigoths. Indeed, for Gregory, the Arians always were the *hostes*—even when they were one's own people.⁴⁷

And this brings us to the problematic *Vita Maxentii*, which reports that a band of Franks, accompanied by Clovis himself, accosted Maxentius, whose monastery was located near the *villa vocabulo Vocladam*.⁴⁸ This would place Voglada in the neighborhood of modern Saint-Maixent-l'École, about 26 modern miles west-southwest of Poitiers. The *vita* repeats the story told by Gregory about the failed decapitation, after which Clovis flung himself on the

47 E.g., Greg. *Hist.* 2.34 (Avitus of Vienne speaking to the Arian Gundobad): *Si enim ad bellum proficiscaris, tu praecedis catervas hostium, et illae quo abieris subsequuntur.*

48 *Vita Maxentii* 11–12 (AASS June 5.170 ff.): *Numquid et illud est reticendum, quod in eo divina gratia contulit memorandum? nam eo tempore contigit ut Franci cum Gothis conflictu bellico advenirent, praecedente eos Chlodoveo Rege. cum autem monasterio propinquassent, in quo s. Maxentius pastor habebatur egregius, et venissent in villam vocabulo Vocladam, instinctu diaboli cogitare ceperunt, ut idem monasterium debellare deberent. cum autem multa de virtutibus s. Maxentii audirent, ejusque meritis vel precibus defendendum putarent, de ejus ceperunt nece tractare, quomodo ipsum extinguere ac punire valerent. tunc antiquus hostis diabolus, qui semper electos dei argumentationum decipulis impugnare non desinit: immisit in corde cujusdam ex barbaris, qui ad debellandum venerant monasterium, ut in sanctum virum manus audacter extenderet, et caput illius gladio amputaret. cumque ad sanctum perventum esset Maxentium, et supradictus barbarus manum impudicam extenderet, ut eum decollaret; suspenso in aëre gladio, manus gladiatoris remansit extensa, et cervix sancti permansit illesa; quia eum salvavit salutis galea, et undique protegebat fidei lorica. tunc nec ensis perfidi spiculatoris mittitur in vagina; nec manus vel vacua ad pristinum redit officium. post paululum autem semetipsum dentibus laniare, ac proprium corpus crebris cepit vulneribus lacerare. tandem vero idem demens, accensus insania, proprius infelix exitit homicida, qui in dei famulum vindictam exercere conatus est frustra: reliqui vero, qui ex acie hostili ad deferenda hujus facinoris solatia convenerant, sic repente luminibus cecati, mente turbati, sensu sunt immutati, ut vix alter alterum cognosceret, aut redire calis pristino praevaleret. “Cumque haec ad aures principis pervenissent Chlodovei, accurrens ocius ipse, ad sanctum virum pervenit; seque prosternens in terram, humiliter adoravit; et veniam sibi suisque cum magnis precibus postulavit. quem locum in quo idem princeps venerabilis ad pedes sancti viri jacuerat, in eodem monasterio usque in hodiernum diem apparere manifestum est. quod ideo nutu dei dispensante factum creditur, ut idem locus tanto tempore intuendus hominibus reservetur, quod in eo victoriae ac miraculorum virtus s. Maxentii demonstretur. auo viso vir deo plenus, cum esset humilitate fundatus, pietate repletus, in caritate perfectissima radicans; his motus precibus, signo Crucis super eos expresso, mox illis eulogiarum ex panis fragmine benedictione largita, sanitatem intulit, et eos incolumes ad castra redire permisit. hi vero qui impio corde in castris remanserant, eandem patiebantur insaniam. quo audito vir dei Maxentius, panem eis sanctificatum misit velocius, ut et ipsi salutem consequerentur interius: sicque factum est, ut dum unus fragmen panis morderet pro salute, et alteri porrigeret pro emundatione, de modico fermento omnes acciperent medicamentum: et sic virtus s. Maxentii, quem prius persequabantur, claruit in agmine; eo quod panis frustra, invicem porrecta, salvaverint ipsos de nece. rex vero Chlodoveus, multis impensis venerationibus, sanctum honoravit Maxentium; deditque ei tunc temporis villam vocabulo Milon, nec non et alia multa. Dated by Kurth, “Bataille,” 177, to the 8th century.*

ground and humbly begged pardon for himself and his men—and gave to Maxentius the villa Milon and many other things. The *Vita Maxentii* is the only source to put Voglada near Maxentius's monastery, and in this regard it is clearly mistaken. The appearance of Clovis, too, is very dubious—for it was clearly to the benefit of the authors of the *vita* to associate the miracle reported by Gregory, not to mention Clovis's benefaction, with Clovis and the Franks, rather than with the Arian Visigoths. The self-serving report of the *Vita Maxentii* that Gregory's *hostes* were Franks therefore is most unreliable.⁴⁹

But the accounts of Gregory and the *Vita Maxentii* are consistent in their reports that there were military operations going on some 26 modern miles west-southwest of Poitiers prior to the battle (and in this regard one should discount suggestions that the Maxentius episode is to be placed after the battle, for a situation with fleeing Visigoths and pursuing Franks does not seem to admit of the leisurely encounter described both by Gregory and the *vita*).⁵⁰ And Gregory's account indicates that it was Alaric's forces—coming from somewhere—operating west of Poitiers. This would be consistent with the suggestion that Alaric did not want to be outflanked.

This now suggests two battle scenarios. Either Clovis pushed south, forced Alaric back from Poitiers, and brought Alaric to battle at Voulon; or Alaric advanced a few miles northwest of Poitiers to confront Clovis near Vouillé. The previous arguments in favor of Vouillé, on the road from Poitiers to Nantes, as the site of the battle would suggest the latter of these scenarios.

But if one is to argue for Vouillé as the site of the battle, there still is the troublesome passage from the *LHF*. How are we to explain the specific assertion that Voglada was on the Clain River, not the Auxance? There are several possibilities. For one thing, the passage in the *LHF* is copied from Gregory, and the words about the Clinno are clearly a gloss, added nearly 250 years after Gregory wrote. It has been suggested that the gloss was added by someone who merely knew that the Poitiers was on the Clain and thus presumed that Voglada was "above the Clain" as well. In addition, the Auxance joins the Clain just north of Poitiers to form the greater Clain, which then joins the Vienne, which in turn joins the Loire. In antiquity, fluminal terminology was not as well defined as it is in the modern day. The same river could have different names, in whole or in part, a famous example being the Danubius and Ister. We do not

49 Gregory himself states that his version of the Maxentius incident had come from a *vita* that he himself had read, viz. *Hist.* 2.37: *Multasque et alias virtutes operatus est, quas si quis diligenter inquiret, librum vitae illius legens, cuncta reperiet*. But Gregory's failure to include significant information, such as the presence of Clovis, suggests that the version Gregory saw was not the same as the extant version, which very probably was subsequently elaborated in order to magnify the monastery's connection with Clovis.

50 See Chamard, "Victoire."

know what the modern Auxance was called in antiquity. Was it considered to be just a part of the Clinno? Were upstream tributaries distinguished by separate names, as in the modern day? If not, then an entire river system would go by a single name, and the modern Auxance and Clain both might have been known collectively as the "Clinno."

On the other hand, the primary argument favoring Voulon has been that Voulon, unlike Vouillé, was directly on the Clain River. But a close look at the geography reveals something quite astonishing: Voulon is not in fact on the Clain, but on a tributary of the Clain, the Bouleure, at the point where a tributary of the latter, the Dive, breaks off from it, 0.6 km or 0.35 miles from the Clain. Of course, one still could argue that Voulon is closer to the Clain than Vouillé, but doing so is a far cry from arguing that Voulon is on the Clain and Vouillé is not. One also could argue that the Voglada of antiquity was located in a different place from the modern village of Voulon, but that would defeat the purpose of identifying Voglada with modern Voulon.

For several reasons, then, Voulon can be eliminated from contention as a possible site for the battle: it is not attested as existing under any name in the medieval period or earlier; it is located south of the city, which would suggest that Clovis occupied Poitiers before the battle, something not mentioned in the sources; it is difficult to derive linguistically from Voglada; it is out of sight of the basilica of Hilary; it is not on a Roman road; it is not 10 Roman miles from Poitiers; and it is not even on the Clain. Vouillé, however, meets all of the stated criteria for the battle site: it is attested as early as the 11th century under the name "Volliacum"; it is consistent with accounts that show Clovis approaching from the north; its name is easily derived from Voglada; the basilica of Hilary can be seen from nearby; it is on a Roman road; and it is ten Roman miles from Poitiers. All of which, of course, does not unequivocally confirm Vouillé as the site of the battle, but does make Vouillé easily the most likely candidate suggested to date. The final word, perhaps, will be delivered by the archeological excavation that discovers the "piles of bodies" described by Venantius.

And in the meantime, we all know the final result of the battle: the genteel and conciliatory Visigoths were replaced by the more unrefined and obdurate Franks as the preeminent barbarian power in Gaul. The future history of Gaul was to be written not by the Goths but by the Franks, who, along the way, also gave it a new name: France. And the battle became memorialized in French history as one of the primary moments in the creation of the French nation and even has been commemorated by changing the name of Vouillé to "Vouillé-la-Bataille," where a plaque states, "alors commença la France."



Fig. 6: Commemorative plaque in Vouillé, France, laying claim to the site of the battle: “Vouillé-the-Battle. It was in these places where in 507 Clovis, king of the Franks, defeated the Visigoths. Then France began.” Photo by R. W. Mathisen.

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Vouillé 507: Historiographical, Hagiographical, and Diplomatic Reconsiderations and *Fortuna*

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So many questions surround Vouillé that 1,500 years later many are still not quite sure what to make of this “decisive battle.”¹ Was it a “famous victory,” as Southey’s fine old poem has it?² Or was it as Robert Graves imagined Marathon for the Persians?³ Something one avoided discussing too much, except to transmit its location with some garbling.⁴ The *NCMH* barely mentions it,⁵ but the sources are worth reexamining, and a new reading of the significance of the battle in the early middle ages may emerge.

This paper will begin with a review of a number of problems that surround Vouillé and a swift tour through some of the textual sources. Second, when Ian Wood and I published our annotated translation of the letters of Avitus of Vienne, we assembled them into meaningful dossiers, some of which were related to genres, others to correspondents, and others to topics.⁶ There was however no dossier on the Battle of Vouillé or on the events of 506–8. As I hope to show, it is worth revisiting some of the letters to see what can be gleaned

1 See Bachrach’s essay in this volume.

2 “But everybody said,” quoth he, / “That ’twas a famous victory”; R. Southey, “After Blenheim,” 35–36. Hans-Werner Goetz, “*Gens, Kings, and Kingdoms: The Franks*,” in *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2003), 320, describes Vouillé as a “notorious victory” but dates it to 506.

3 Robert Graves, “The Persian Version”: “Truth-loving Persians do not dwell upon / The trivial skirmish fought near Marathon.”

4 Isidore of Seville, *Historia Gothorum*, MGH AA, Chron. Min. 2.281–82: *Fludovicus Francorum . . . in regione Pictavis urbis and postremum regem apud Pictavis superatum interfecit and Chron Saragossae*; MGH AA, Chron. Min. 2.223 s.a. 507: *His diebus pugna Gothorum et Francorum Boglada facta*. Victor Tunnunensis has *Boglodoreta*. The battle’s site has been much disputed since the 16th century: now we seem to be down to Vouillé or Voulon. See R. A. Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber historiae Francorum*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford/New York, 1987), 41, and Mathisen’s essay on Vouillé in this volume.

5 P. Fouracre, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 1: c. 500–700 (Cambridge, 2005), 52, 145, etc.

6 D. R. Shanzer and I. N. Wood, *Avitus of Vienne: Selected Letters and Prose*, TTH 38 (Liverpool, 2002), ix.

from them, if one is sensitized to a particular historical problem. The curious distribution of sources for the war, their nature, and *Tendenz*, all create a real Rashomon phenomenon: Clovis was to blame,⁷ Alaric was to blame, the Burgundians were to blame,⁸ Theoderic was to blame,⁹ the eastern empire was to blame. The war was about religion;¹⁰ it was about money.¹¹ How can one navigate between these multiple proposed causations and reconcile dissonant sources? While guilt may prove elusive, there may be more to be said about causation, both religious and financial.

Historiography

One narrative account of the battle survives in Greg. *DLH* 2.37, told about 80 years later from the perspective of one who identified with the winning Franks.¹² The one eastern source, Procopius, mistakenly locates the battle at Carcassonne.¹³ There are two subsequent early medieval accounts in Fredegar and in the *LHF*,¹⁴ both of which are (in part) dependent on Gregory. And there is contemporary epistolography—of which more later.

Gregory's *DLH* 2.37 first. The start of the story is embellished with a Macauleyesque direct speech in which Clovis does not take it kindly that the Arians held part of Gaul. He marched to Poitiers where Alaric was waiting. Time is allowed for a pious digression about his army's respect for Saint Martin in the territory around Tours and Clovis's own request for auspices from Martin for his upcoming campaign with the *gens incredula*. He receives an oracular psalmic *sors biblica* promising victory. A miraculous deer shows him where to ford the Vienne. When he arrives in Poitiers, a light-signal, *pharus*, emanating from the basilica of Hilary also provided encouragement. Near Poitiers an abbot Maxentius encountered a troop of Visigoths. One tried to kill him, but was repelled by the holy man, who anointed his arm and restored its power. The monastery was unharmed. Clovis and Alaric met at the Campus Vogladensis at

7 Cassiodorus and Gregory.

8 Possibly Cassiodorus.

9 Fredegar and Procopius.

10 Avitus and Gregory.

11 Fredegar and Avitus.

12 Fredegar 3.24 covers the battle. *LHF* 17 is dependent on Gregory with an addition of *super fluvium Clinno* to the specification that the battle took place at the Campus Vogladensis.

13 Procop. *Bell.* 1.12.35, with Mathisen, "Clovis," in this volume.

14 It has taken from Gregory much of the religious material, such as the injunction not to pillage the shrine of Saint Martin, the reception of an auditory oracle of good omen, the miraculous epiphany of a deer. There is a charming joke about the financial negotiations of Martin with regard to Clovis's horse!

the 10th milestone outside Poitiers. The Goths turned tail (as usual),¹⁵ and Clovis won. He himself killed Alaric. A large contingent from the Auvergne, who had come with Apollinaris, fought with Alaric, and their leaders, who were of the senatorial class, fell. Clovis continued south to Bordeaux and then to Angoulême. When he returned to Tours, he did not neglect to offer gifts to Saint Martin.

The story, as has long been recognized, is heavily worked over to give it a churchy flavor.¹⁶ Here the campaign starts as an anti-Arian crusade.¹⁷ That this was the case is questionable, given Clovis's alliance with the Arian Gundobad to dismember the Visigothic kingdom¹⁸—not to mention the Arian Theoderic's attempts to make peace. Silence in Gregory's own anti-Arian hagiography belies any picture of Visigothic Gaul as a serious persecuting society.¹⁹ The king piously asks Martin's help. Three miracles support him, and three saintly figures, Martin, Hilary, and Maxentius, are involved. A ring-composition brings Clovis back to Tours and to Saint Martin—small surprise, given who was writing the *Histories*.²⁰ These are all features readers are *meant* to see.

But authors also let down their guard. *Qui s'excuse, s'accuse*, and emphasis on how Clovis did *not* loot merely draws attention to the likelihood that he *did*. One should compare the tale of the Vase of Soissons earlier in his career.²¹ The difficulties caused for the Aquitanians are supported by the documentary

15 A feigned retreat, as Bachrach now explains in his essay in this volume.

16 G. Kurth, *Histoire poétique des mérovingiens* (orig. 1893; repr. Paris, 1968), 269.

17 One should compare Greg. *DLH* 3. *præf.*

18 Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 368; not to mention the next generation's willingness to espouse their sister, Clotilde 2, to the Arian Amalaric, with unfortunate results (*DLH* 3.1, 10).

19 Only three of Gregory's anti-Arian miracles can be localized in Gallic Visigothia: *GM* 12 Miraculous defense of Bazas against "Gausericus" and droplet miracle, but no persecution (this dates to the second decade of the 400 s), *GM* 77 Nîmes and Ara, dux of Theoderic (but it is not narrated as an anti-Arian miracle); *GM* 78 Agde Comes Gomarichus, datable between 506 and 589 in Septimania, so Visigothic; Gomacharius, the grabber of ecclesiastical land, is described as an heretic; the Nicenes as "Romani." The following all are unlocalized or localized elsewhere: *GM* 23 Springs at Osser; *GM* 24 Heretic brings horse into basilica at Osser; *GM* 25 Spring at Osser, all under Theudegisel in Spain; *GM* 79 Arian and wife (unlocalized); *GM* 80 Arian priest and ring (perhaps Ostrogothic Italy, because of mention of deacon from Ravenna); *GC* 13 (unlocalized); *GM* 81 Martyr beaten in Spain.

20 G. Kurth, "Les Sources de l'histoire de Clovis dans Grégoire de Tours," *Études franques* 2 (Paris, 1919), 213, for Turonian material in the history of Clovis.

21 *DLH* 2.27; See Gregory's elaborate apologetics in the episode of the Vase of Soissons in *DLH* 2.27: *Eo tempore multae aecliesiae a Chlodovecho exercitu depraedatae sunt, quia erat ille fanaticis erroribus involutus.*

evidence in Clovis's letter to the Aquitanian bishops.²² One must not ignore the filling in Gregory's episcopal sandwich, namely that Romans from Clermont who came with Apollinaris had fought, and many noble senators had fallen with the Visigoths.²³ Why did he mention this? It does not seem to be a detail added in sorrow.²⁴ Here one can connect a text. One of the dossiers in the Avitus collection concerned Avitus's main correspondent in the Visigothic kingdom, his cousin Apollinaris.²⁵ None of these letters can be securely dated, but one, to the very Apollinaris mentioned by Gregory, alludes to his being mustered for war—to Avitus's horror.²⁶ These Romans faced a dilemma: the devil they knew, Alaric II,²⁷ or one they did not, Clovis. There may have been some question surrounding their loyalty (as there certainly seems to be in Avitus's letters), and Gregory's addition is more plausibly defensive than obfuscatory.²⁸ Being found a traitor is never attractive.

Hagiography

Gregory's historical narrative can profitably be compared with some hagiography of his friend Venantius Fortunatus: an isolated pericope among the miracles (*virtutes*) of Hilary of Poitiers:

Quid etiam dignum referam de tam regali mysterio, quod ab ipso est in regem collatum? Denique ipse Chlodoveus, dum contra haereticam gentem pugnaturus armatas acies commovisset, media nocte meruit de basilica beati viri lumen super se venientem adspicere, admonitus, ut festinanter, sed non sine venerabilis loci oratione adversum hostes conflictaturus descenderet. Quod ille diligenter observans et oratione occurrens tanta prosperitate altero pro se pugnaturus processit ad bellum, ut intra horam diei tertiam ultra humana vota sortiretur victoriam, ubi multitudo

- 22 *Chlodowici Regis ad episcopos epistula*, MGH Leges 2.1 = *Capitularia Regum Francorum*, ed. A. Boretius (Hannover, 1883), 1–2, cites Clovis's precepts about not looting, about ecclesiastical captives, lay captives taken in battle, and clerics and laymen taken *in pace*, bishops' *apostolia* and *multorum varietates vel falsitates*. For the interpretation, see D. R. Shanzer, "Dating the Baptism of Clovis: The Bishop of Vienne vs. the Bishop of Tours," *Early Medieval Europe* 7.1 (1998): 47–48.
- 23 *DLH* 2.37: *Maximus ibi tunc Arvernorum populus, qui cum Apollinare venerat, et primi qui erant ex senatoribus corruerunt*.
- 24 Kurth, "Les Sources de l'histoire de Clovis," 246, sees here oral tradition.
- 25 *Epist.* 24, 36, 51, 52. See Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 337–49.
- 26 Avitus, *Epist.* 24: *Nam re vera nuntio vestri discessus accepto in summo metu et trepidatione pendimus; quia nobis diversis nuntiis dicebatur vos dominorum quibus vos observatis accitu cunctos pariter evocatos*. Note that Greg. *DLH* 2.37 implies that Amalaric was at Vouillé: *de hac pugna . . . Amalaricus in Spaniam fugit*.
- 27 Who had just sponsored a conciliatory council at Agde in 506. See Halfond's essay in this volume.
- 28 E. James, *The Franks* (London, 1988), 86–87, sees here some deliberate obfuscation on Gregory's part.

cadaverum colles ex se visa sit erexisse. Ecce terribiliter formidanda prodigia et delectabiliter amplectenda miracula! Parum illi fuit pro solatio regis, signum luminis ostendere, nisi aperte monita addidisset et vocis. Similis quaedam contigit, Israelitici populi tempore, hujus causa virtutis. Nam ibi columna ignis populum praecesserat, hic figura lampadis admonebat. Vellem nosse, quod fuerit tanti ardoris secretum mysterium, tam manifeste prolatum. Sed quantum ipso inspirante videor agnoscere, non tacebo. Nam contra haereticas acies, sicut olim in corpore, non cessavit spiritu dimicare: credebatur sibi contra Halaricum Arrianum iterum redire Constantium. Quanta fuit illi semper pro cultu catholicae religionis aviditas; cum in requie posito, adhuc sollicitudinis non desit ubertas? Nam qui tunc in synodo ad confundendum hostem verba fidelia protulit, hic in campo arma tractavit victoriae. (Fortunatus, *Liber de virtutibus S. Hilari* 7.20–21)

How can I do justice to that most royal mystery which was conferred upon the king by him? Clovis, when he had set in motion his troops to fight against an heretical people, was fortunate to see in the middle of the night a light coming upon him from the basilica of the blessed man [Hilary], and was advised to go down swiftly to fight against the enemy, but not to forget to pray in the sacred place. After he had observed [this advice] to the letter and gone forward with a prayer, he proceeded to war with such success, because another was fighting on his behalf, that, by the third hour of the day, far beyond human prayers, a victory had fallen to his lot, where the multitude of corpses seemed to heap themselves up of their own accord. Behold prodigies to be feared terribly and miracles to be embraced with delight! It was little for him [i.e., Hilary] to show the sign of the light to console the king, had he not, openly, added the admonitions of a voice too. In the days of the Israelites a similar situation prompted this miracle. For there a column of fire had gone ahead, and here the shape of a lamp warned. I would like to know what was the secret mystery of the great flame that was brought forth so publicly. But—under his inspiration—I will not be silent about as much as I seem to know. He did not cease to fight in the spirit against heretical forces, as he had not stopped in the past when he was in the body. He thought that Alaric the Arian was coming against him again as Constantius had. How great was his perpetual zeal for the Catholic faith, when even though he was laid to rest, his deep care was not lacking! For the one who then brought forth faithful words to confound the enemy in the synod, this one in the field handled the arms of victory.

Fortunatus does not name the site of the battle, but his base, Poitiers, and the participation of his local saint, Hilary, guarantee that Vouillé was intended. He parallels Gregory in seeing it as an antiheretical campaign. He mentions the light Gregory alluded to, but describes it as a lamp.²⁹ He adds a vocal admonition to pray at Hilary's shrine. We hear that Clovis was told to "go down" (*descenderet*) to fight (which fits the local topography) and that he won by the third hour, namely by 9:00 a.m. There must have been massive slaughter. The hero of the story is not Clovis, however, but Hilary, a dead hand reaching

29 A. Richard's rationalizing interpretation in "Les Légendes de Saint-Maixent et la victoire de Clovis en Poitou," *Revue des questions historiques* 33 (1883): 615, that it was a signal, makes sense and is accepted by Bachrach in this volume.

from beyond the grave in competition with Martin and with the human instrument Clovis.³⁰

Every detail can help to improve the composite image of this battle, so some corrections of various aberrant interpretations of the Fortunatus passage. Moorhead saw evidence that “many years later the remains of bodies could still be seen on the battlefield,”³¹ and Richard thought it evidence of *tumulus*-burials on the battlefield.³² But both have misinterpreted the Latin. Fortunatus’s *ubi multitudo cadaverum colles ex se visa sit erexisse. Ecce terribiliter formidanda prodigia et delectabiliter amplectenda miracula!* means “where the multitude of corpses seemed to have heaped themselves up of their own accord. Behold prodigies to be feared terribly and miracles to be embraced with delight!” The masses of bodies that seemed to have heaped themselves up of their own accord are the “fearful prodigies,” and the light portent the “delightful miracle.” So, no more than heaps of dead for rationalizers. Thus far the hagiographically coloured literary sources, in which this battle and its war are regularly presented as religious crusades.

Religion, Victory, and Theology

We need, however, to note the potentially embarrassing question of the relationship of Vouillé’s date to that of Clovis’s baptism.³³ I have gone on record in favor of a late date for baptism (508) and am thus disinclined to credulity on this point.³⁴ But even if one does not believe in genuine anti-Arian motivation, one still might ask whether religion was a real pretext of Clovis’s³⁵ rather than a pious fiction of various ecclesiastical writers, endorsed by subsequent French Catholic historians.

The Burgundians, a people of mixed confession, provide some interesting documentary parallels.³⁶ And there are certainly signs of Catholic war theology in the letters Avitus wrote his prince Sigismund. Various undated letters allude

30 Gregory in *DLH* 2.37 also mentions Hilary’s antiheretical polemic, but Fortunatus elides Martin. Fredegar 3.24 adds Hilary’s church to Martin’s as a recipient of Clovis’s largesse in return for their help.

31 J. Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy* (Oxford/New York, 1992), 178.

32 Richard, “Les Légendes de Saint-Maixent,” 614. Followed now by M. Becher, *Chlodwig I: Der Aufstieg der Merowinger und das Ende der antiken Welt* (Munich, 2011), 229.

33 Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy*, 178–79.

34 Shanzer, “Dating the Baptism of Clovis.” To which I would now add the clear hint, *fera gentilium corda*, in Cass. *Variae* 2.40.17 that Theoderic regarded Clovis as a pagan in 506/507.

35 As Kurth, *Histoire poétique des mérovingiens*, 267, thought.

36 K. Binding, *Das burgundisch-romanische Königreich (von 443–532 n. Chr.)* (Leipzig, 1868), 197.

to the prince's conversion to Catholicism and feature good wishes for his success on campaign. They specifically refer to the role of his faith in battle, e.g., *Epist.* 45 *fidem vestram telis inserite, provisionem divinam promittendo admonete, auxilia caeli precibus exigit; iaculis vestra vota armate* ("Put your faith in your weapons, give warning by promising divine oversight. Pray for help from heaven, arm your missiles with prayers"). Avitus alluded in a previous sentence to Sigismund's conversion: *Sed praesumo de maiestate divina hinc respectum mei sensibus vestris tenacius adhaesurum, quo eum vobis amor catholicae legis infudit* ("But I assume that, as a favor from God, from this point on, the thought of me will adhere more tenaciously to your senses, since the love of Catholic law has poured it into you"). But the Latin perfect is ambiguous. Does Avitus's *quo eum* [sc. *respectum*] *vobis amor catholicae legis infudit* ("by which the love of the Nicene faith has infused regard in you") mean "has infused" as if they even were comparatively recent or simply "infused," in which case they could refer to the past?³⁷ The letter must have as its terminus post quem Sigismund's conversion, which itself must have occurred by 501/502.³⁸ *Epistle* 45 could thus show Sigismund away on campaign, either shortly after his conversion—in which case it is not related to the war of 507—or in 507/508. But the emphasis on *fides* and its effect on military success may suggest that the enemy may not have been Catholic.³⁹ This does not leave many alternatives to the Visigoths.⁴⁰ *Epistle* 91 mentions Sigismund's Catholicism and enjoins caution in war, but contains no war theology. *Epistle* 92, however, is a strong candidate for 507/508, because it alludes to "joining what is near" and "subduing what is opposed" in a context that includes Catholicism:

Quippe cum quicumque veraciter *catholicorum* nomen usurpant, pervigili prece Deo supplicare nunc debeant, ut vobis vota nostra illibata atque integra relaturis, et *fideliter vicina coniungat, et feliciter adversa subiciat* sicque in rerum necessitate multiplici ambifariam vobis Christo propugnante contingat et pax, quae cupitur et victoria, quae debetur.

For all who honestly take upon themselves the name of "Catholic" ought now to entreat God with nightlong prayers, that he faithfully join what is near and with a happy outcome overthrow what is hostile on your behalf, when you will convey our prayers to him, untouched and whole, and that thus, in a complicated and difficult situation, with Christ to fight before you, you may gain both the peace you desire and the victory you are owed.

37 *Epist.* 45, p. 74.24–25 Peiper.

38 See Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 221.

39 See *Epist.* 46: *vestra fides nostra victoria*.

40 Only the Alemanni remain, and the timing and location of their conflicts with the Burgundians are very unclear. The episode of Gebavult in *Vita Lupi* 10, e.g., is suspect. It was interpolated from Eugippius's *Vita Severini* 19. See B. Krusch, *Vitae Passionesque Sanctorum*, MGH SRM 7, Hannover, 1920, 287.

Binding took the *vicina* as the Franks and the *adversa* as the Visigoths⁴¹ and thereby found the only hard evidence for the alleged pact between the Franks and the Burgundians.⁴² One might suggest an alternative. Since the Franks and the Burgundians moved separately on the campaign of 507,⁴³ the *vicina* may refer not to *meeting* or *joining forces with* the Franks, but to *annexation*, be it of the neighboring Nicene Romans or their Visigothic territory. *Adversa* would then refer to the Visigothic forces. The two clauses could be two sides of one action: “faithfully [or in faith] join what is near, and with good outcome overcome what is hostile.” This still leaves the question of what the Burgundians were doing in 507/508, which ones, and where.

In 1996 Philippe Bernard suggested that the phrase *Vestra fides nostra victoria est* in Avitus, *Epist.* 46 (p. 75.7 Peiper), his letter of congratulation to Clovis on the occasion of his baptism, meant more than “your conversion is our [Catholic/episcopal/missionary] victory.”⁴⁴ He compared Ambrose’s *De obitu Theodosii* 8⁴⁵ to suggest that Avitus was talking about conversion and a military victory with an echo of the Frigidus behind him.⁴⁶ He argued for a direct connection between Ambrose and Avitus.⁴⁷ The bishop of Vienne was alluding to Clovis’s “conversion battle” of 496 against the Alemanni and invoking the panegyric theology of imperial victory.

Such matters, as Bernard realized, cannot be proven.⁴⁸ It is a question of richer or more topical readings. While one cannot prove that Avitus knew Ambrose (whom he does not use otherwise), for the trope “x = victoria” is fairly

41 Binding, *Das burgundisch-romanische Königreich*, 195.

42 An exception might be Isidore, *Historia Gothorum* s.a. 507: *Adversus quem Fluduinus Francorum princeps bellum movet, Burgundionibus sibi auxiliantibus*, but the chronology is not clear.

43 There is no evidence of a Burgundian presence at Vouillé. Instead one must use the *Vita Heptadii* 12 to trace their route, which seems to have gone through the Limousin. See Binding, *Das burgundisch-romanische Königreich*, 196. Binding (198) explains their late arrival, arguing that Clovis dragged out the main battle until the Burgundians could take part. He seems to think that they did. Bachrach in his essay in this volume argues that the Burgundians were never intended to fight at Vouillé.

44 P. Bernard, “*Vestra fides nostra victoria est*: Avit de Vienne, le baptême de Clovis et la théologie de la victoire tardo-antique,” in *Clovis chez les historiens* (Paris/Geneva, 1996), 47–51.

45 *De obitu Theodosii* 8 *Theodosii ergo fides fuit vestra victoria: vestra fides filiorum eius fortitudo sit.*

46 Bernard, “*Vestra fides nostra victoria est*,” 49.

47 Ibid., 49.

48 Ibid., 49: “Il semble . . . que le discours d’Avit *gagne* à être resitué dans le cadre de la “théologie de la victoire impériale.”

common, Avitus can still demonstrably be participating in a discourse about faith and victory on which Ambrose likewise drew.⁴⁹

One might advocate a new nuanced version of Bernard's suggestion with a different referent, not the Alemannic battle, but Vouillé. In this case *vestra fides* refers to Clovis's new and recent conversion and *nostra victoria* to the joint victory of the Franks and Burgundians in the war of 507/508. This particular theology of victory may have emerged from Catholic Burgundy in the wake of Sigismund's conversion and been promulgated by Avitus and sold directly to Clovis.

The Vita Sollemnis Carnoteni

Into the *fortuna* of Vouillé enters the legend of the problematic *Vita Sollemnis Carnoteni*.⁵⁰ Sollemnis seems to be an intruder between bishops Flavius and Aventinus at the beginning of the 6th century. Krusch dates his listing to the 11th century, but the *Vita Sollemnis* itself to before Hrabanus Maurus.⁵¹ Martin Heinzelmann dates the text to the 8th century on the basis of its language.⁵² Sollemnis's historicity is immaterial however for current purposes. The *Vita Sollemnis* is an early medieval text with independent value as a witness to the reception of Clovis's Visigothic campaign and conversion and baptism. It shows a clear military theology with Clovis beginning his Visigothic campaign under the auspices of Sollemnis at Chartres.⁵³ The *Vita Sollemnis* attempts to connect Clovis with Chartres, but also and far more prominently, to hijack the story of Clovis's battlefield conversion from Gregory, give it a Constantinian *in hoc signo vinces* flavor emphasizing the cross, marry it to Gregory's narrative about Vouillé, and recast Sollemnis as the saint who presided over the victory against the heretical Visigoths.⁵⁴ Martin is removed from the picture, and Remigius

49 Compare other Ambrosian texts, e.g., from *De fide*; 1 prol. 15: *Nosti enim fide magis imperatoris quam uirtute militum quaeri solere uictoriam*; 2.16.3: *Progredere plane "scuto fidei" saepius et gladium spiritus habens, progredere ad uictoriam superioribus promissam temporibus et diuinis oraculis profetatum*; 3.15.44: *Quomodo fidem eorum possumus denegare, quorum uictoriam praedicamus?*

50 See Krusch, *Passiones Vitaeque Sanctorum*, 303–21.

51 Ibid., 303.

52 M. Heinzelmann, "Clovis dans le discours hagiographique du VI au IX siècle," *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes* 154.1 (1996): 105.

53 *Vita Sollemnis* 7: *contra Gothorum regem proelium*.

54 I am thus reading the genesis of the *Vita Sollemnis* differently from W. Levison, "Zur Geschichte des Frankenkönigs Chlodowech," *Bonner Jahrbücher* 103 (1898): 64. He takes the details as historical, but the battle as an earlier battle against the Visigoths, after 499, but before "the" battle, namely Vouillé.

ungraciously accorded second billing.⁵⁵ Most significant is the fact that the “conversion battle” here is not the battle against the Alemanni, but one against the Visigoths that could indeed be Vouillé. Clovis’s faith enabled him to triumph against heresy, not paganism. In the course of time the *fortuna* of Vouillé, as in some way connected with Clovis’s baptism, began to be reflected in different places, such as Nicetius of Trier’s letter to Chlodosuintha⁵⁶ and eventually in the *Vita Sollemnis*. The conjunction of Vouillé and baptism could bolster the argument for a late baptism.⁵⁷

Diplomatic Letters

From a pragmatic perspective, that of the school of history that works from speculation about “what I would have done, if I had been there,”⁵⁸ the causes of the war of 507 might seem clear. It was an expansionist campaign by the Franks, eager to gain control of the southern provinces of Gaul, for reasons of power and access to the Mediterranean.⁵⁹ Clovis was feeling his oats and a safe eastern front after a major Alemannic victory in 496 or 506.⁶⁰

But this is not how the ancient documentary sources present matters. In Italy Cassiodorus was close to one focus of the ellipse of the political crisis, writing diplomatic letters for Theoderic to Clovis, Gundobad, Alaric, and the kings of the Warni, Heruli, and Thuringians.⁶¹ His letters tell a different tale. Alaric is reassured that the quarrel is not about territory invaded,⁶² nor about the killing of kinsmen (major *casus belli*, presumably). In 506 it was still “a small dispute about words,”⁶³ something that could easily be surmounted, if one

55 *Vita Sollemnis* 9 Sollemnis, baptizes Clovis *adiuncto sibi sancto Remedio!*

56 *Epist. Austras.* 8.18 with, however, some garbling for the war with Gundobad antedated the baptism according to advocates of the later date. D. Geuenich, *Geschichte der Alamannen* (Stuttgart/Berlin/Köln, 1997), 81, points out the pride of place of Vouillé, not the conversion battle against the Alamanni.

57 Becher, *Chlodwig I*, 276, now does the math and concludes that Sollemnis’s episcopacy could not have fallen later than 499 (if the numbers in the *Vita Sollemnis*) are correct. He sees support instead for an earlier baptism.

58 A parody of R. G. Collingwood, *An Autobiography* (Oxford, 1970), 112–14.

59 Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy*, 179; D. Claude, “Clovis, Théodoric et la maîtrise de l’espace entre Rhin et Danube,” *Clovis, Histoire et mémoire* (Paris, 1997), 1.419 calls his ambitions “continentale,” as opposed to Theoderic’s Mediterranean ones.

60 The clear implication of Cass. *Variae* 2.41. See Claude, “Clovis,” 418, on the significance of the conquest of the Alamanni for the Franks.

61 On the politics, see H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, new ed. (Berkeley, 1988), 190.

62 *Non graviter urit occupata provincia.*

63 *Variae* 3.1.3: *adhuc de verbis parva contentio est*. Perhaps alternatively, “There is so far little dispute about words.”

avoided recourse to arms. It was a *lis*, or legal disagreement.⁶⁴ Theoderic implies that the solution may lie in *iustitia*.⁶⁵ For Clovis it could be presented as arising *causis mediocribus* (“from trivial causes”).⁶⁶ For Gundobad the matter was a *causa*, a matter under dispute.⁶⁷ The letter to the kings of the Warni etc. reveals that the *causa* was one that could be settled by recourse to the *leges gentium*.⁶⁸ If one considers these multiple insights into the issue, what kind of issue could it have been?

Third and Fourth Parties?

And who wanted it to happen? In the letters to Alaric and to Clovis appear covert allusions to third parties. These opinions are usually ascribed to, for example, the Byzantines or the Burgundians, but could also be even narrower references to specific individuals, whose identities we can no longer recover. In *Variae* 3.1 to Alaric we see: “Lest you seem to suffer at the suggestion⁶⁹ of those who evilly rejoice in others’ battles.” And in *Variae* 3.4.4 someone’s *aliena malignitas* was sowing *scandala* for Clovis.⁷⁰ Some third party, it is suggested, was using Alaric as a cat’s-paw. It is difficult to imagine the Byzantines in direct contact with Alaric II, but the Burgundians could plausibly have egged him on to attack Clovis. And, in the case of Clovis, who is the one who wishes to send another headlong into disaster, who, it is certain, was not advising in good faith?⁷¹ This could indeed be the Byzantine emperor, Anastasius, but it could also be the Burgundians, whom Theoderic at the time did not know would join the Franks. And then *Variae* 3.4.2 *multi qui vos metuunt de vestra concertatione laetentur*. Who are those afraid of the Franks who would like them to fight with the Visigoths? These could be the Burgundians, since Theoderic was unaware of their alliance with Clovis. But perhaps also the Alamanni, who would eventually

64 *Variae* 3.1.3: *litem vestram*.

65 *Variae* 3.1.2.

66 *Variae* 3.4.2.

67 Cass. *Epist.* 3.2 to Gundobad: *quatenus causa, quae inter eos vertitur, amicis mediis rationabiliter abscedatur*.

68 *Variae* 3.3.2: *leges gentium quaerat*.

69 *Ne videamini illorum inmissione laborare, qui maligne gaudent alieno certamine*. S. J. B. Barnish, *The Variae of Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator . . . Being Documents of the Kingdom of the Ostrogoths in Italy*, TTH 12 (Liverpool, 1992), 45: “lest you should be harassed by the incitements of those who maliciously rejoice in another’s war.” See *TLL* s.v. *immissio* 466.42: *i.q. temptatio, instigatio, suggestio*.

70 *Ut nullatenus inter vos scandala seminet aliena malignitas*. According to G. Kurth, *Clovis* (Tours, 1896), 421, it is the Byzantine emperor.

71 *Variae* 3.4.5: *is qui vult alterum in praecipites casus mittere, eum certum est fideliter non manere?*

fall under Frankish dominion in 537.⁷² Byzantium had no reason to fear Clovis. These letters clearly show that rumors and allegations were rife. And unless they constitute a deliberately deceptive attempt to minimize the issues, the *causa* might have been resolvable.

A Financial Explanation

One might divine what such a resolvable *causa* could have been, by combining the testimony of the *Variae* with a few other sources. Junghans and Binding drew attention to Alaric's financial difficulties, using two sources: First, the *Vita Aviti Eremitae*, which mentions Alaric's attempts to muster soldiers and to melt silver together into a giant mass,⁷³ and, second, Avitus's *Epist.* 87, which refers to Alaric's very recent debased mixture of gold that he ordered the official mints to produce.⁷⁴ There is a third and neglected item, albeit from a problematic source, namely one of "Fredegar's" interpolations in his chronicle.⁷⁵

In Fredegar 2.58 appears a curious story about a disagreement between Alaric and Clovis concerning alleged treachery by the Goths on the occasion of a

72 They were defeated in 496/506 and fled to northern Italy. See Ennodius, *Pan.* 15 (72): *Quid quod a te Alamanniae generalitas intra Italiae terminos sine detrimento Romanae possessionis inclusa est? cui evenit habere regem, postquam meruit perdidisse.* Also *Variae* 2.41: *si cum reliquis confligis.* The debate continues about whether Clovis had "a" decisive Alammanic victory in 496 or in 506 or whether there were multiple engagements against multiple kings and any number of unsung battles against unnamed rulers. Geuenich, *Geschichte der Alamannen* 85–86, argues for decentralization, multiple battles, and multiple kings—and hence no explicit politics and the absence of correspondence to named individuals in the *Variae*.

73 W. Junghans, *Die Geschichte der fränkischen Könige Childerich und Chlodovech kritisch untersucht* (Göttingen, 1857), 82; Binding, *Das burgundisch-romanische Königreich*, 193, citing AASS Jun. 3: *Ea tempestate Alaricus, Christiani nominis publicus inimicus, regnum Gothorum obtinuit: qui tyrannica crudelis animi rabie, et feralis saevitiae atrociante, adepti regni potentia in superbiam elatus, & quia brachio suae fortitudinis undequaque affines vincere est solitus; spei animatus majoris fiducia, oppugnandi scilicet gratia regnum adire disposuit Franciae; quod suae pertinaciae votum ut firmitus roborari videt assensu suorum totius regni, [argenti] ponderosa massa per exactores in unum corpus conflatur: & quisque ex militari Ordine viribus potens, donativum Regis volens nolens recepturus, per praefatos urgente sententia invitatur.*

74 See I. N. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–571* (London/New York, 1994), 47, for a modern restatement of the theory.

75 Disappointingly not discussed by J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long-Haired Kings and Other Studies in Frankish History* (New York, 1962), 84–87, culminating in "He was no fool—and no fabricator, having no need to be one."

diplomatic summit. Theoderic was chosen as mediator,⁷⁶ and, since he wanted the Visigoths and Franks to be at odds, he allegedly set a condition they would not be able to fulfill. They were to cover a mounted Frankish envoy, presumably Paternus, the protagonist of the episode, and his upright spear with gold and deliver the payment to Clovis. Alaric aimed to fool Clovis's ambassador Paternus by showing him that he did not have the resources in his treasury. Paternus seized one *solidus* and claimed it as a pledge for his master. Then the war started. As we hear later, Clovis seized all the Visigothic treasure from Toulouse.⁷⁷ And even Procopius (who seems to have garbled the location) mentions Alaric II's legendary hoard and its capture by the Franks.⁷⁸ Thus a variety of independent sources converge in explicit allusions to financial problems.⁷⁹ Fredegar, odd as he is, has quite a few details that sound circumstantial⁸⁰ and resonate with more respectable sources.⁸¹

The author of the work in question was never called Fredegar,⁸² and how many authors are reflected in the compilation ascribed to him and what their dates were is much debated.⁸³ Suffice it to say, it does not matter whether the relevant section predates 613,⁸⁴ or whether it was part of the compilation of the unitary author advocated by Goffart.⁸⁵ Regardless of Fredegar's own terminus ante quem, the style of the Theoderician pericope suggests an earlier and happier period for Latinity than the 7th century. Its nature and position⁸⁶ are such as to make clear that it was extracted from some sort of pre-7th-century

76 For the language of arbitration in the dossier in the *Variae*, see A. Gillett, *Envoys and Political Communication in the Late Antique West, 411–533*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, 4th series (Cambridge/New York, 2003), 209–10.

77 Greg. *DLH* 2.37; Fredegar 3.24: *Thensaurus Alarici a Tholosa auferens*.

78 Procop. *BG* 1.12.69 locates the hoard at Carcassonne rather than Toulouse, but is clearly talking about the Visigothic royal treasury, comprising fabulous items from Alaric's siege of Rome and from the Temple at Jerusalem.

79 I thus disagree with Junghans, *Die Geschichte der fränkischen Könige*, 80: "Ueber den eigentlichen Anlass zum Kriege erfahren wir also auch hier nicht Näheres."

80 E.g., the envoy on the balcony. As we know from Augustine, *Epist.* 13* Divjak visitors might sleep on them.

81 E.g., the *iudicium*/arbitration to which the two submit, the role of Theoderic as the deciding judge, the fuss about protocol that recalls the neutral safe territory at Amboise.

82 See Krusch, *Fredegarii et Aliorum Chronica*, xi; and R. Collins, *Die Fredegar-Chroniken*, MGH ST (Hannover, 2007), 8–15, 25–38.

83 Collins, *Die Fredegar-Chroniken*, 16–25.

84 Per Krusch, *Fredegarii et Aliorum Chronica*, 3, discussed by Collins, *Die Fredegar-Chroniken*, 9.

85 See W. Goffart, "The Fredegar Problem Reconsidered," *Speculum* 38 (1963): 206–41.

86 It appears in Fredegar 2.58, not in 3.24 where one would expect to find it. Paternus, however, Clovis's legate, is mentioned in 3.24. G. Kurth, "L'Histoire de Clovis d'après Frédégaire," *Revue des questions historiques* 47 n.s. 3 (1890): 94, notes Fredegar's emphasis on Alaric's fraud and culpability.

Gesta of Theoderic.⁸⁷ The story is regularly criticized as “sagenhaft”⁸⁸ or “légende barbare.”⁸⁹ Only Kurth explains more clearly what he means, but the very details he cites, e.g., touching of the beard to become *filius per arma*, seem to be elements that might speak for authenticity rather than for epic or fairy tale.⁹⁰

Even though Theoderic characterizes the Visigoths in *Variae* 3.1.1 as soft after a long peace, there is evidence of conflict with the Franks in the years prior to Vouillé, e.g., the capture of Bordeaux in 498⁹¹ and the *foedus* secured at Amboise in 502.⁹² Fredegar (2.58) too mentions *multa prilia*. But *longa pace mollescere* is compatible with both four to five years of peace as well as with a history of defensive conflict. And, as Wilhelm Levison pointed out over one hundred years ago, Cassiodorus mentions only the Visigothic conflict with Attila, not their whole 5th-century military history.⁹³ Thus Fredegar’s narrative (cleaned up for fantasy elements) could fit in as one of these conflicts prior to 507. And the tale of diplomacy and protocol nicely parallels Gregory on the ceremony of Amboise. The same event in two versions?⁹⁴ Or an episode subsequent to Amboise?

Thus no contemporary simply accuses Clovis of being a rogue king eager to expand his territory, and none explicitly treats the campaign of 507 as an anti-Arian crusade for Clovis. Contemporary propaganda for faith and arms, however, comes from the Burgundian side and can later be seen in the *Vita Sollemnis*. One might suggest that Clovis was empowered by it too, and that Vouillé, not the victory against the Alamanni, became his real Constantinian moment. If one reads Avitus’s *Vestra fides nostra victoria* as meaning “your [polite plural] faith is our [Frankish and Burgundian] victory,” one can combine some contemporary evidence with what would eventually become a full-fledged

87 Rightly noted by Krusch, *Fredegarii et Aliorum Chronica*, 200. Not however the *Gesta Theoderici* printed by Krusch in MGH SRM 2.202–10, which supposedly cannot antedate the 12th century.

88 M. Hardt, *Gold und Herrschaft: Die Schätze europäischer Könige und Fürsten im ersten Jahrtausend*, Europa im Mittelalter (Berlin, 2004), 32n88.

89 Kurth, “L’Histoire de Clovis d’après Frédégaire,” 95.

90 Theoderic adopted the king of the Heruli as his *filius per arma* in *Variae* 4.2; Eutharic became *filius per arma* to Justin, even though the two were close in age. See *Variae* 8.1: *Desiderio quoque concordiae factus est per arma filius, qui annis uobis paene uidebatur aequaeuus*. “Märchen” is the word used by Krusch, *Fredegarii et Aliorum Chronica*, 7.

91 Auct. Havn. (MGH AA, Chron. Min. 1.331, s.a. 496: Alaricus ann. xii regni sui *Santones obtinuit*; and s.a. 498: *Anno xiv Alarici Franci Burdigalam obtinuerunt et a potestate Gothorum in possessionem sui redegerunt capto Suatrio Gothorum duce*. See also Levison, “Zur Geschichte des Frankenkönigs Chlodowech,” 62–64.

92 James, *Franks*, 86.

93 Levison, “Zur Geschichte des Frankenkönigs Chlodowech,” 67.

94 A reasonable suggestion of Junghans, *Die Geschichte der fränkischen Könige*, 80.

narrative in which Clovis's conversion and baptism were linked to what I would suggest is Vouillé in the *Vita Sollemnis*. The Ostrogothic evidence clearly points to some sort of case (*causa*) or incident, which Theoderic took it upon himself to resolve. The Byzantine evidence shows Theoderic "in control," playing the false ally to his northern clients, allied first to the Franks and then to the Visigoths.⁹⁵ It is thus an evil twin⁹⁶ of the role Theoderic saw himself in—till the Burgundians derailed his plans. The later Frankish evidence presents the conflict as a pious crusade, except for the rogue Fredegar, who may be closer to what it was actually all "about": not faith alone, but face—and finance.⁹⁷

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95 Procop. *BG* 1.12.

96 As in the narrative in Fredegar, where Theoderic wishes to set Alaric and Clovis at odds. Junghans, *Die Geschichte der fränkischen Könige*, 79, noted the contrast between the *Variae* and Theoderic's role in Fredegar.

97 One might guess captive exchange, tribute, or hostages. For the latter see *Variae* 3.4: *quibus obsidibus habeatur fides, si non credatur affectibus?*

- Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*. Edited by H.-W. Goetz, J. Jarnut, and W. Pohl. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2003.
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Clovis, Anastasius, and Political Status in 508 C.E.

The Frankish Aftermath of the Battle of Vouillé

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In the second book of his *Histories*, Gregory of Tours narrated the events that followed the defeat of the Visigoths and their king Alaric II by Clovis and the Franks at the Battle of Vouillé in 507.¹ In *Hist.* 37, he reported, for the year 508, “After that, when the victory was complete, he returned to Tours, where he gave many gifts to the basilica of Saint Martin.”² In the index, the title for the next chapter, 38, reads, *De patriciatu Chlodovechi regis* (“On the Patriciate of King Clovis”). The related text describes Clovis’s visit to Tours (fig. 1) as follows:

Therefore he received from Emperor Anastasius codicils of the consulate and in the basilica of the blessed Martin, placing a diadem on his head, he was clothed in a purple tunic [*tunica blattea*] and the chlamys [*clamide*]. Then, mounted on horseback, he dispensed gold and silver with great generosity along the route that lies between the city gate and the church of the city,³ scattering it with his own hand to people who were present, and from that day he was addressed as if he were a consul or emperor [*tamquam consul aut augustus*]. Then he departed from Tours and came to Paris, and there he fixed the seat of the kingdom.⁴

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- 1 An abbreviated and less well-developed French version of this study appeared as R. W. Mathisen, “Clovis, Anastase, et Grégoire de Tours: Consul, patrice et roi,” in *Clovis, le Romain, le chrétien, l’Européen*, ed. M. Rouche (Paris, 1998), 395–407. Pace Bachrach (in this volume), this earlier study in fact suggested that Clovis received the patriciate, honorary consulate, and recognition as king and did not present “an either/or interpretation.”
 - 2 *Peracta victoria, Turonos est regressus, multa sanctae basilicae sancti Martini munera offerens* (Greg. *Hist.* 2.37). For the battle, see the essays in this volume by Mathisen (on Vouillé), Bachrach, and Shanzer.
 - 3 That is to say, the cathedral inside the walls of the city, not the basilica of Saint Martin, which was outside the walls.
 - 4 *Igitur ab Anastasio imperatore codicillos de consolato accepit, et in basilica beati Martini tunica blattea indutus et clamide, inponens vertice diademam. tunc ascenso equite, aurum argentumque in itinere illo, quod inter portam atque [ms. atri] ecclesiam civitatis est, praesentibus populis manu propria spargens, voluntate benignissima erogavit, et ab ea die tamquam consul aut augustus est vocitatus. egressus autem a Toronus, Parisiis venit ibique cathedram regni constituit* (Greg. *Hist.* 2.38). For Clovis’s visit to Tours, see also Bachrach’s essay in this volume.



Fig. 1: An 1848 engraving depicts a mounted Clovis entering Tours garbed in a *trabea* as a Roman consul or triumphing general and accompanied by Roman-appearing soldiers. A *dispensator* scatters largesse to the crowd. Source: J. David (designer), G. T. Devereux (engraver), in John Frost, *Pictorial History of the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: Moore, 1848), 50.

This account has generated much debate among scholars. One wonders exactly what honors and titles Clovis received. Was he named consul, patrician, king, emperor, a combination of these, or something else?⁵ Or was Gregory simply

5 Only a fraction of the multitude of speculations that have been made can be cited here. Honorary consulate (the standard view): J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire from the Death of Theodosius I to the Death of Justinian (A.D. 395 to A.D. 565)*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1923), 1,464; W. Ensslin, "Nochmals zu der Ehrung Chlodowechs durch Kaiser Anastasius," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 56 (1936): 499–507; L. Schmidt, "Aus den Anfängen des salfränkischen Königstum," *Klio* 34 (1942): 306–27 at 320–21; K. F. Stroheker, *Der senatorische Adel im spätantiken Gallien* (Tübingen: Alma Mater, 1948; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftlichen Buchgesellschaft, 1970), 109; P. Leveel, "Le consulat de Clovis à Tours," *Etudes mérovingiennes*, Actes des journées de Poitiers, 1er–3 mai 1952 (Poitiers, 1953), 187–90; K. Hauck, "Von einer spätantiken Randkultur zum karolingischen Europa," *Frühmittelalterlicher Studien* 1 (1967): 3–93 at 20–26; E. Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Beck, 1970), 68; R. Weiss, *Chlodwigs Taufe: Rheims 508* (Bern/Frankfurt, 1971), 110–19; M. Reydellet, *La royauté in la littérature latine de Sidoine Apollinaire à Isidore de Séville* (Rome, 1981), 406–8; I. N. Wood, "Gregory of Tours and Clovis," *Revue Belge* 63 (1985): 249–72 at 268–70; E. James, *The Franks* (Oxford, 1988), 87; M. McCormick, "Clovis at Tours, Byzantine Public Ritual, and the Origins of Medieval Ruler Symbolism," in *Das Reich und die Barbaren*, ed. E. Chrysos and A. Schwarcz (Vienna, 1989), 155–80 at 163; M. Spencer, "Dating the Baptism of Clovis," *Early Medieval Europe* 3 (1994): 97–116 at 109; Jean-Marie Sansterre, "Die Franken und Byzanz," in

mistaken?⁶ And, what is the importance of this event in the context of relations between the Franks and the Byzantine Empire?

The following study will consider the connections among all parts of the ceremony in the context of contemporary ceremonial practices in order to determine whether the ceremony was more appropriate to the patriciate, consulate, or something else. Gregory mentions eight elements of the ceremony, as follows, first in the index and then in the text:

1. receipt of the patriciate
2. receipt of the codicils of the consulate
3. coronation with the diadem
4. wearing a purple tunic

Die Franken Wegbereiter Europas: Vor 1500 Jahren: König Chlodwig und seine Erben (Mainz: von Zabern, 1996), 396–400 at 396: “ohne Zweifel das Ehren-Konsulat”; and Olivier Guillot, “Clovis ‘Auguste,’ vecteur des conceptions romano-chrétiennes,” in *Clovis, Histoire et mémoire: Le baptême de Clovis, son écho à travers l’histoire*, Michel Ruche (Paris: l’Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1997), 705–27 at 721. Patriciate: H. Günter, “Der Patriziat Chlodwigs,” *Historisches Jahrbuch* 54 (1934): 468–75; E. A. Stuckelberg, *Der constantinische Patriciat: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der späteren Kaiserzeit* (Basel/Geneva, 1891), 62n8. Honorary consulate and perhaps patriciate: S. Dill, *Roman Society in Gaul in the Merovingian Age* (London: Macmillan, 1926, repr. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970), 104–5; J. R. Martindale, ed., *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 2: A.D. 395–527 (Cambridge, 1980), 290 (hereafter *PLRE*); Martin Heinzelmann, “Gallische Prosopographie 260–527,” *Francia* 10 (1982): 531–718 at 581. Honorary consulate and patriciate: Mathisen, “Clovis”; Helmut Castritius, “Chlodwig und der Tag von Tours im Jahre 508,” in *Völker, Reiche und Namen im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. Matthias Becher and Stefanie Dick (Munich, 2010), 113–20; Matthias Becher, *Chlodwig I: Der Aufstieg der Merowinger und das Ende der antiken Welt* (Munich: Beck, 2011), 237. Consulate or patriciate: J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long-Haired Kings and Other Studies in Frankish History* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1962), 175–76; Y. Hen, “Clovis, Gregory of Tours, and Pro-Merovingian Propaganda,” *Revue Belge* 71 (1993): 271–76 at 273. Proconsul or honorary consul: Fiona K. Haarer, *Anastasius I: Politics and Empire in the Late Roman World* (Cambridge: Cairns, 2006), 95. Honorary proconsulate: Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 1.464. Honorary consulate or Augustus: J. Verseuil, *Clovis, ou la naissance des Rois* (Paris, 1992), 157. Quasi-Augustus: Dill, *Gaul*; *PLRE* 2.290; R. Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 181. The first “Kaiser”: B. Krusch, *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie* (1933): 1050 ff.; L. Schmidt, “Die angebliche erste deutsche Kaiser-krönung im Jahre 508,” *Historisches Jahrbuch* 54 (1934): 221–22. “Augustal prefect”: Bachrach’s essay in this volume.

- 6 See, in general, G. Kurth, “Les sources de l’histoire de Clovis in Grégoire de Tours,” *Revue des questions historiques* 44 (1888): 388–96 = *Etudes franques* 2.211–18; W. Levison, “Zur Geschichte des Frankenkönigs Chlodowech,” *Bonner Jahrbucher* 10 (1898): 42–67 = idem, *Aus rheinischer und frankischer Frühzeit*, 201–28; L. Halphen, “Grégoire de Tours, historien de Clovis,” in *À travers l’histoire du moyen-âge*, ed. L. Halphen (Paris, 1950), 31–38; Wood, “Gregory of Tours and Clovis.”

5. wearing the chlamys⁷
6. mounting a horse
7. distribution of gold and silver
8. acclamation as if a consul or emperor

The Honors That Clovis Received

Most historians believe that Clovis must have received either the consulate or the patriciate. They therefore must choose one or the other.⁸ With regard to the consulate, Gregory's use of the word *tamquam* suggests that the consulate Clovis received was not a true consulate.⁹ And because Clovis's name does not appear in the *fasti consulares* or in any Gallic consular dating formula, one must conclude that Gregory could not have been referring to the ordinary consulate.¹⁰ So, if Clovis indeed received a consulate, it would have been the honorary consulate, which certainly was accompanied by codicils (fig. 2).¹¹ Gregory's

7 From Gregory's wording, *tunica blattea indutus et clamide*, it is unclear whether *blattea* modifies *tunica* and *clamide* or just *tunica*.

8 E.g., McCormick, "Clovis," 154–59; Schmidt, "Anfängen," 320. And, as noted by Castritius, "Chlodwig," 115–16, the index entry on the patriciate is very often given scant attention.

9 See Lewis and Short, *Latin Dictionary*, 1839, where *tamquam* is translated as "just as, like as, as if, as it were, so to speak," that is, always with qualifications. See Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 1.464n1: "The expression *tamquam consul* seems to be equivalent here to *ex consule*, the official title of honorary consuls"; see also Christian Courtois, "Exconsul: Observations sur l'histoire du consulat à l'époque byzantine," *Byzantion* 19 (1949): 37–58; and A. Chastagnol, "Observations sur le consulat suffect et la préture du Bas-Empire," *Revue historique* 219 (1958): 221–53. No are there any significant manuscript variations of this phrase (MGH SRM 2.1.89). Many commentators simply ignore *tamquam*, as in the translation of L. Thorpe, *Gregory of Tours: History of the Franks* (Penguin, 1974), 154, and as a result accuse Gregory of being mistaken, see, e.g., I. N. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751* (London, 1994), 48: "Gregory's claim that he was hailed as consul and Augustus at Tours must be a misunderstanding"; also James, *Franks*, 87: "Gregory says he was called *consul aut augustus*. . . . Gregory may be reported a story . . . which misreported or misremembered"; Guillot, "Clovis," 707: "habituellement acclamé comme consul ou Auguste," 723; and Sansterre, "Die Franken und Byzanz," 396.

10 See PLRE 2.1245; R. S. Bagnall, A. Cameron, S. Schwartz, and K. Worp, eds., *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire* (hereafter *CLRE*) (Atlanta, 1987), 550–51. The consuls for 508 were Basilius Venantius in the Ostrogothic kingdom and Fl. Celer and Basilius Venantius in the east. In Gaul, the consuls of 506 were reused.

11 *CTh* 6.22; see also Cass. *Variae* 6.10: *Formula qua per codicillos vacantes procures fiant*; CJ 3.24.3 (474/491): *honorariis . . . codicillis*; *Nov. Just.* 105: *codicillos* for ordinary consuls; CJ 12.3.3 for *honorarii consularatus insignibus*; note also Greg. Mag. *Epist.* 2.36 (MGH *Epist.* 1.132), where the byzantine *codicilli exconsularatus* cost three pounds of gold. See

account thus is quite consistent with the receipt of the honorary consulate. But the patriciate also was granted through codicils (fig. 3),¹² so the use of codicils alone does not answer the question of what honor Clovis received.

To answer this question, one can look at the ways in which honors were granted in the late Roman world. It was quite common for a person to receive both the honorary consulate and the patriciate,¹³ including such as Dioscurus¹⁴ during the reign of Leo I (457–74) and under Zeno (474–91), Adamantius,¹⁵ Epinicus,¹⁶ Pamprepius,¹⁷ Leontius,¹⁸ and Isaac.¹⁹ Under Anastasius (491–518), one notes, among others,²⁰ Marianus²¹ and Clementinus.²² Similarly, the emperors often granted honors, including the honorary consulate and patriciate, to barbarian potentates.²³ These patterns are quite consistent with Gregory's

also F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC–AD 337)* (Ithaca, 1977), 308; L. Levillain, "La crise des années 507–508 et les rivalités d'influence en Gaule de 508 à 514," in *Mélanges offerts à M. Nicholas Iorga* (Paris, 1933), 537–67 at 546. See also, in general, R. W. Mathisen, "Leo, Anthemius, Zeno, and Extraordinary Senatorial Status in the Late Fifth Century," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 17 (1991): 191–222.

- 12 *Nov. Just.* 80 (537) for *imperiales codicilli*. Castritius, "Chlodwig," 117–18, notes a tantalizing illustration from the "Ravenna Annals" that seems to be showing Emperor Valentinian III handing a crown or diadem to the newly installed patrician Fl. Aëtius; he does not go so far, however, as to suggest that Aëtius actually received a diadem or crown, and in fact it is not clear that the item actually is a crown. Other contemporary illustrations certainly depict patricians holding codicils. The diptych of Probianus, however, does not depict him as a patrician (as Castritius, "Chlodwig," 119), but merely as a magistrate wearing the chlamys; see *PLRE* 2.909. It would in any case have been rather unusual at this time for such a junior magistrate to receive the patriciate.
- 13 For a mostly complete list, see *PLRE* 2.1246; for other honorary consuls, note Florus 3, Justinianus 4, and Marsus 2 (qq.vv. in *PLRE* 2); also noted by McCormick, "Clovis," 161, 176.
- 14 *Suda* N 395, D 1208; omitted from the fasti of honorary consuls at *PLRE* 2.1246.
- 15 *PLRE* 2.6–7.
- 16 *PLRE* 2.397.
- 17 *PLRE* 2.827; D. Pingree, "Political Horoscopes from the Reign of Zeno," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 30 (1976): 135–50 at 144–46; A. Delatte and P. Stroobant, "L'horoscope de Pamprépius, professeur et homme politique de Byzance," *Bulletin de l'Académie Royale de Belgique, Classe des lettres* 9 (1923): 58–76; and R. Asmus, "Pamprepius, ein byzantinischer Gelehrter und Staatsmann des 5. Jahrhunderts," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 22 (1913): 320–47.
- 18 *PLRE* 2.671.
- 19 *PLRE* 2.626.
- 20 E.g., Strategius (*PLRE* 2.1034–36); Iulianus (*PLRE* 2.641); Leontius 23 (*PLRE* 2.672–73); Leontius 27 (*PLRE* 2.673–74); Iohannes 68 (*PLRE* 2.610); and Germanus 4 (*PLRE* 2.506).
- 21 *Suda* M 194; *PLRE* 2.722.
- 22 Fl. Taurus Clementinus Armonius Clementinus: *ex cons.* [sc. *honorario*], *patricius*, *et cons. ordin.* [in 513 C.E.] (*PLRE* 2.303).
- 23 For the honorary consulate, note the Bulgar Maurus ca. 680, mentioned in the *Miracula s. Demetrii*: P. Lemerle, ed., *Les plus anciens recueils des miracles de S. Démétrios et la*



Fig. 2: A 4th-century consul, wearing a fancy tunic underneath his toga, holds the *codicilli consulatus* in his left hand and a *mappa*, for starting a chariot race, in his right. Source: Rodolfo Lanciani, *The Ruins and Excavations of Ancient Rome* (Rome, 1897), 404, fig. 153.

account, and it is therefore quite possible that for this reason alone, according to the Byzantine tradition, Clovis received both the patriciate and the honorary consulate.²⁴ And as for the reason that Gregory mentioned the patriciate in the

pénétration des Slaves in les Balkans (Paris, 1979), 1.167–24; also McCormick, “Clovis,” 162. For the patriciate, see Stückelberg, *Patriciat*, 21–24.

24 The vast majority of modern commentators suppose that Clovis received only the honorary consulate (n. above); among the few to suggest the patriciate and consulate together have been Mathisen, “Clovis”; and, more recently, Castritius, “Chlodwig,” 120: “Clodwig war . . . Konsul und Patrizius,” who also notes that the honorary consulate was “kaeuflich erworben werden konnte”; and Becher, *Chlodwig I*, 237, who cogently observes “dass der Ehrenkonsulat eine Würde war, die man im oströmischen Reich sogar



Fig. 3: A fragmentary diptych dated to the 5th century depicts a patrician wearing a chlamys holding the codicils of rank. The rank is indicated by the broad band, which would have been colored purple (cf. fig. 5), decorated with elaborate stars in circles, in the middle of the chlamys. The underlying tunic has sleeves to cover the arm. Source: R. Delbrück, *Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler* (Berlin/Leipzig, 1929), pl. 47.

index and not in the text, it is conceivable that Gregory saw the patriciate as a higher honor, which was indeed the case, especially in Gregory's own time, when

kaufen konnte," and would have been quite inappropriate as an honor "eines wichtigen Bundesgenossen."

the consulate had gone out of use, but the patriciate continued to be a significant office and rank.²⁵ So the title of the chapter specified the honor of the patriciate, and the text described the details that accompanied it, such as the honorary consulate, the tunic, the cloak, and so on.

Status Considerations

Additional insights into which honors Anastasius granted to Clovis can be gained by considering the role of status in Byzantine diplomacy. In Late Antiquity, Roman emperors often attempted to conciliate barbarian chieftains with grants of both real and honorary titles. In the west, for example, the Burgundian king Gundobad became patrician and master of soldiers in succession to Ricimer in 472,²⁶ and four years later the barbarian chieftain Odovacar, who had appropriated the title of king, received the patriciate from Emperor Zeno.²⁷ In the east, in Moesia Inferior, the Ostrogothic general Theoderic was made first patrician by Zeno, at approximately the same time as Odovacar, and then consul for the year 484.²⁸ Later, in 489, Theoderic went to Italy, where as of 493, after defeating and killing Odovacar, he reigned as “king of the Ostrogoths.”

At the beginning of Anastasius's reign in 491, Clovis, in Gaul, was not a high priority for the Byzantine emperor.²⁹ Clovis then was just one among many barbarian *reguli* who inhabited the old Roman west and, indeed, only one of several Frankish *reguli*.³⁰ But after his victories over Syagrius in 486, the

25 Some, such as Guillot, “Clovis,” 721, have dismissed the chapter heading as “qu'une interprétation faite au temps de Grégoire,” but it seems scarcely credible that someone writing some eighty years later would have made any such connection, especially given that by the late 6th century the office of “patrician” had quite a different significance, having nothing whatsoever to do with the consulate. For status issues, see R. W. Mathisen, “Emperors, Consuls, and Patricians: Some Problems of Personal Preference, Precedence, and Protocol,” *Byzantinische Forschungen* 17 (1991): 173–90; and for the Merovingian patriciate, see B. S. Bachrach, *Merovingian Military Organization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972), 41 and passim.

26 Granted by Emperor Olybrius (472); *PLRE* 2.524–25.

27 Malchus, frag. 10; *PLRE* 2.791–93; see Cass. *Chron.* s.a. 476: *Cum tamen nec purpura nec regalibus uteretur insignibus.*

28 *PLRE* 2.1077–84.

29 In general, for Anastasius and Clovis, see J. Prostko-Prostyński, *Utræque res publicæ: The Emperor Anastasius I's Gothic Policy* (Poznań, 1994), 248–53; Haarer, *Anastasius*, 95; and Mischa Meier, *Anastasios I: Die Entstehung des Byzantinischen Reiches* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2009).

30 For the designation *regulus*, see Steven Fanning, “Reguli in the Roman Empire, Late Antiquity, and the Early Medieval Germanic Kingdoms,” in *Romans, Barbarians, and the*

Alamanni and Thuringians in the 480 s and 490 s, and the Burgundians in 500, Clovis's stature grew.³¹ At some point, probably by ca. 495, Theoderic the Ostrogothic married Clovis's sister Audofleda.³² Then, in 507, against the wishes of his brother-in-law Theoderic,³³ Clovis defeated the Visigoths and killed Alaric II, Theoderic's own son-in-law, at the Battle of Vouillé. Following his victory, Clovis became not only the most powerful ruler in Gaul, but also the enemy of Theoderic, who, in turn, invaded Provence and Narbonensis and became the regent of the young Visigothic king Amalaric in Spain.³⁴

Anastasius then attempted to win the friendship of the Frankish king. There was at least one very good political reason for doing so. The relationship between Anastasius and Theoderic never had been cordial. For example, in 506 there were hostilities between the armies of Anastasius and Theoderic in Dacia, and in 508, the same year that he gave the honors to Clovis, Anastasius attacked Italy.³⁵ Anastasius, therefore, saw Clovis as a potential ally against Theoderic,³⁶ and the only weapon that Anastasius had in his arsenal to try to gain favor with the Frankish king was the granting of honors. But which ones? Barbarian kings were just as sensitive to issues of status, rank, and honor as Roman senators.³⁷ On the one hand, to grant to Clovis just the honorary consulate would have been an insult because that would have left Clovis ranking below not only Theoderic but even the Burgundian Gundobad, whom Clovis had defeated

Transformation of The Roman World: Cultural Interaction and the Creation of Identity in Late Antiquity, ed. R. W. Mathisen and D. R. Shanzer (Ashgate, 2011), 43–53.

- 31 Syagrius: L. Schmidt, "Das Ende der Römerherrschaft in Gallien (Chlodowech und Syagrius)," *Historische Jahrbuch* 48 (1928): 611–18. Alamanni: F. Vogel, "Chlodwigs Sieg über die Alamannen und seine Taufe," *Historische Zeitschrift* 61 (1886): 385–403; B. Krusch, "Chlodovechs Sieg über die Alamannen," *Neues Archiv* 12 (1886): 289–301; A. van de Vyver, "La victoire contre les Alamans et la conversion de Clovis," *Revue belge* 15 (1936): 859–914 and 16 (1937): 35–94 (506 C.E.). In general, see B. S. Bachrach, "Procopius and the Chronology of Clovis's Reign," *Viator* 1 (1970): 21–31; and J. Calmette, "Observations sur la chronologie de règne de Clovis," *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* (1946): 193–202.
- 32 Audofleda: *PLRE* 2.185. The son of Theoderic's daughter Amalasuintha was born in 516, suggesting that Theoderic and Audofleda were married by ca. 495; see Spencer, "Dating the Baptism of Clovis."
- 33 Cass. *Variae* 3.1–4.
- 34 See Roger Collins, *Visigothic Spain, 409–711* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 41–45.
- 35 Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 1.465; Marcell. *Chron.* s.a. 508: MGH AA 11.97: *Romanus comes domesticorum et Rusticus comes scholariorum . . . ad devastanda Italiae litora processerunt et usque ad Tarentum antiquissimam civitatem aggressi sunt, remensoque mari inhonestam victoriam, quam piratico ausu Romani ex Romanis rapuerunt, Anastasio Caesari reportarunt*; see Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 49: "The year 508 marked the nadir of relations between the Byzantine empire and the Ostrogothic king Theoderic."
- 36 See Courtois, "Exconsul," 46n1; and Levillain, "Rivalités," 542.
- 37 See, e.g., R. Frouin, "Du titre roi porté par quelques participants à l'imperium romanum," *Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis* 9 (1929): 140–49.

eight years earlier.³⁸ Likewise, if Anastasius gave Clovis the patriciate alone, the result would have been the same. Only the grant of the honorary consulate and patriciate together would have permitted Clovis to outrank Gundobad, although Clovis still would have ranked beneath Theoderic, who had held the ordinary consulate. And even making Clovis ordinary consul, something that would have been unthinkable under any circumstances, would have left him ranking below Theoderic on the basis of priority of office holding. In fact, there was no other office, except that of Augustus, that would have allowed Clovis to exceed Theoderic in rank.³⁹ It therefore was necessary, for diplomatic reasons, for Anastasius to do the best he could and grant Clovis both the patriciate and the honorary consulate.⁴⁰ To do otherwise would have left Anastasius looking miserly and insulting at a time he wanted to appear generous and accommodating.

The Ceremony in Tours

In order to gain further insight into the nature of the Tours ceremony, we now can ask whether other aspects of the ceremony coincide with the receipt of the patriciate, the honorary consulate, or something else. The minimal ceremony that accompanied the grant of the patriciate may have involved no more than the delivery of the codicils of rank.⁴¹ The ceremony surrounding the ordinary consulate was much more elaborate and is much better known, but we do not know what ceremonies, if any, were associated with the honorary consulate.⁴² As

38 For the procedures for assessing rank and status, see Mathisen, "Senatorial Status"; and idem, "Emperors, Consuls, and Patricians."

39 See Wallace-Hadrill, *Long-Haired Kings*, 175–76: "He could scarcely have bestowed on him a Byzantine rank inferior to that already held by the Burgundian king (i. e., Mag. mil. and patricius)." Several erroneously think that Clovis exceeded Theoderic in status; see, e. g., Hen, "Clovis," 273; Verceuil, *Clovis*, 157; and Wood, "Clovis," 269.

40 Wallace-Hadrill, *Long-Haired Kings*, 175, e. g., thinks that Byzantine ambassadors presented the codicils of whatever honor he received to Clovis at Tours.

41 Note Licinianus, in 475, as a *gerulum codicillorum, quorum in adventu . . . honor patricius accedit* when Ecdicius was named patrician in 475 (Sid. Apoll. *Epist.* 5.16.1); see also *CTh* 10.21.1–3; Cass. *Variae* 3.10; CIL 12.338; Joh. Lyd. 1.17; Joh. Ant. frag. 169; Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De caerimoniis* 1.10, 47–48, 2.52, 11.17; also R. Delbrück, *Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler* (Berlin/Leipzig, 1929), no. 64, p. xxxvii; Jullien, "Processus," 152; H.-P. L'Orange, *Studien zur Geschichte des spätantiken Porträts* (Rome, 1965), no. 201, 80–81; Stückelberg, *Patriziat*, 61.

42 Honorary consulate: see n above. For the ordinary consulate, see CJ 3.24.3: *consulari viro, quem tam ordinaria processio quam sacra nostrae pietatis pariter sublimavit oratio*; Cass. *Variae* 6.1; C. Jullian, "Processus consularis," *Revue de Philologie* 7 (1883): 145–63. For the procession of a *consul suffectus*, see Symm. *Epist.* 6.40 (401 C.E.) (*palmata*) and *SHA Aurel.* 13.3 (*tunica palmata et toga picta*); see Jullien, "Processus," 148.

described by Gregory, once Clovis reached the city gate of Tours he began a traditional *adventus* (“arrival”) ceremony of the sort that was used both by newly installed consuls in Rome and by high dignitaries, including emperors, important state officials, and even bishops, when they arrived at a city.⁴³ This phase of the procession terminated at the city cathedral.

The *tunica blattea* (“purple tunic”) presents many difficulties. It has been suggested, for example, that it was the same as the *toga picta*, also known as the *toga palmata*, *vestis palmata* (or just *palmata*), or *trabea* (fig. 4).⁴⁴ This was the purple ceremonial toga worn by consuls, ex-ordinary consuls, and, in the past, triumphing generals;⁴⁵ it also might have been suited for honorary consuls.⁴⁶ But this assumption is problematic: the *trabea* was purple, but also with rosettes of gold and portraits of earlier emperors, and it was a toga, not a tunic.⁴⁷ The same could be said for the *toga praetexta*, the toga with a purple stripe worn by curule magistrates.

Some modern sources also refer to a so-called *tunica palmata* or *tunica picta*.⁴⁸ The only ancient references to such garments, however, come from the *Augustan History*. The life of the Gordians (238–44) reported, “He was the first

43 For consular ceremony, see R. W. Mathisen, “L’*adventus* consulaire pendant l’antiquité tardive,” in *Les entrées royales et impériales: histoire, représentation et diffusion d’une cérémonie publique, de l’Orient ancien à Byzance*, ed. Agnès Bérenger and Eric Perrin-Saminadayar (Paris, 2009), 139–56. In general, see Sabina MacCormack, “Change and Continuity in Late Antiquity: The Ceremony of *Adventus*,” *Historia* 21 (1972): 721–52, and eadem, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

44 As Schmidt, “Anfangen,” 320–21. See Juvenal. *Sat.* 10.35: *praetextae, trabeae, fasces, lectica, tribunal*; Tert. *De idolatria* 18: *quo more nunc praetextae, vel trabeae vel palmatae, et coronae aureae sacerdotum provincialium*; Tert. *De corona* 13: *coronae Etruscae . . . quas . . . cum palmatis togis sumunt*; Pan. lat. 12/2.9.6: *inde est quod accepimus, datos serentibus fasces, et missas cum curulibus suis per rura palmatas, quod agricolas consulares, pastoresque trabeatos*; Pan. lat. 2/10.3.1: *trabeae vestrae triumphales*; Aus. *Lib. protrep.* 92: *trabeam pictamque togam*; Cass. *Variae* 9.23.4–6: *nam si homines ornat semel accepisse palmatam . . . trabea quoque resplendeat triumphali*; Sid. Apoll. *Carm.* 2.2–7: *effulgens trabealis mole metalli / . . . te picta togarum / purpura plus capiat*; Ven. Fort. *Vita Mart.* 2.452 ff.: *alter palmatae, trabeae nitet alter honore*.

45 See Servius. *Ad Aeneidem* 7.612: *ipse quirinali trabea: Suetonius in libro de genere vestium dicit tria genera esse trabearum: unum dis sacratum, quod est tantum de purpura; aliud regum, quod est purpureum, habet tamen album aliquid; tertium augurale de purpura et cocco [scarlet]*.

46 For honorary consuls as equivalent to exconsuls, see Bagnall et al., *CLRE* 9.

47 See Delbrück, *Consulardiptychen*, 43–54.

48 See N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard, eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1962), 1095; Alföldi, “Insignien,” 29; also H. T. Peck, ed., *Harper’s Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities* (New York, 1898), 1610, 1618: “The purple *tunica*, adorned with golden palm branches (*tunica palmata*), was, with the *toga picta* . . . the dress of a general on the occasion of a triumph.”



Fig. 4: Caesar Constantius Gallus wearing the consular *trabea* as consul for the year 354. The underlying tunic can be seen below, but its color is uncertain. At the lower left is an empty sack that held coins scattered as part of the imperial largesse. From the *Calendar of 354*. Source: R. Delbrück, *Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler* (Berlin/Leipzig, 1929), pl. 20.

of the Romans to wear as his own garment the *tunica palmata* and the *tunica picta*, although previously emperors had in fact gotten it from the Capitol or the palace.”⁴⁹ And in the life of Aurelian (270–75), Emperor Valerian (253–60)

⁴⁹ *Palmatam tunicam et togam pictam primus Romanorum privatus suam propriam habuit, cum ante imperatores etiam vel de Capitolio acciperent vel de Palatio* (HA Gord. 4.4).

reportedly wrote to the future Emperor Aurelian, “Receive, therefore, four red ducal tunics, two proconsular cloaks (*pallia*), a *toga praetexta*, a *tunica palmata*, a *toga picta*, an immeasurable *subarmalis*,⁵⁰ an ivory chair.”⁵¹ Given that there seems to be no other reference to a *tunica palmata* or a *tunica picta* (nor to a “duc tunic,” a “proconsular cloak,” or a *subarmalis*, for that matter), one might suspect that the *Augustan History* was making fun of the senatorial obsession with ceremonial garb, with these two nonexistent garments being a parody of the *toga palmata* and *toga picta*.

The joke continued in the same life, where one finds the only other extant reference to a *tunica blattea*, in this case a garment that Aurelian supposedly allowed Roman matrons to wear.⁵² And, in the same source, Emperor Gallienus was said to have worn a *purpurea tunica*.⁵³ But neither of these garments is attested elsewhere either. Indeed, at the time of the writing of the *Augustan History* in the late 4th century, it seems to have been quite common to make fun of extravagant finery: Ammianus Marcellinus, for example, derided the senatorial wearing of heavy, long-fringed cloaks, and tunics embroidered with multicolored shapes of animals.⁵⁴ It thus may be that the parody in the *Augustan History* reflects some actual practices: perhaps senators actually did wear tunics that were modeled on ceremonial togas. But Gregory’s own reference to a *tunica blattea* may, perhaps, be nothing more than a reference to the *tunica laticlava*, a white tunic with a broad purple stripe, worn by senators, which would have been quite consistent with a grant of the honorary consulate.⁵⁵ Or, it could refer to a purple garment that simply did not have an established ceremonial role and whose function was purposely left ambiguous.

The chlamys, on the other hand, was the standard ankle-length official garb of high-ranking Roman officials. It was normally white and was pinned at the right shoulder with an ornate fibula. It was forbidden to consuls and senators.⁵⁶

50 A word known only from the *HA*, apparently referring to a garment worn under the arm, cf. *HA Severus* 6.11: *praetorianus cum subarmalibus inermes sibi iussit occurrere*.

51 *Cape igitur tunicas russas ducales quattuor, pallia proconsularia duo, togam praetextam, tunicam palmatam, togam pictam, subarmalem profundum, sellam eburatam* (*HA Aurel.* 13.3).

52 *Concessit ut blatteas matronae tunicas haberent* (*HA Aurel.* 46).

53 *Purpuream tunicam auratamque* (*SHA Gall.* 16.3–4); it was clearly distinguished from his *clamyde purpurea*.

54 *Amm.* 14.6.9: *ambitioso vestium cultu ponentes, sudant sub ponderibus lacernarum . . . exceptantes eas manu utraque et vexantes crebris agitationibus, maximeque sinistra, ut longiores fimbriae tunicaeque perspicue luceant, varietate liciorum effigatae in species animalium multiformes*.

55 For the *tunica laticlava*, see Delbrück, *Consulardiptychen*, 43–52.

56 Joh. Lyd. 1.17; Delbrück, *Consulardiptychen*, no. 64; and L’Orange, *Studien zur Geschichte*, 80–81n201. See *CTh* 14.10.1 (382): *Nullus senatorum habitum sibi vindicet*

A chlamys with a broad purple stripe was worn by patricians,⁵⁷ and only emperors wore the purple chlamys (fig. 5). The wearing of the chlamys, therefore, would have been quite consistent with a grant of the patriciate. But the chlamys of a patrician, a military garment, would never have been worn at the same time as a *trabea* of a consul, a civilian garment, another reason why the *tunica blattea* should not be interpreted as any form of toga. Thus, Clovis must have been wearing the chlamys, at least as his outer garment, during the Tours ceremony, a conclusion not surprising in any event, given that the patriciate was an honor far superior to the honorary consulate. The *tunica blattea*, therefore, could not have been anything associated with the consulate and, if worn at all, would have been worn under the chlamys.

Being mounted on a horse likewise was consistent with the wearing of the chlamys, but not with the consulate, for consuls rode in chariots, not on horseback.⁵⁸ On horseback, Clovis would have thrown the chlamys over his left arm as a general's paludamentum, as was customary in *adventus* ceremonies (fig. 6).⁵⁹ With the chlamys worn in this way, it was traditional to wear military garb underneath, not a tunic, although it is not impossible that Clovis could have broken with tradition and worn the *tunica blattea* under the chlamys and revealed it when he mounted his horse.

The distribution of largesse, moreover, originally was part of the ceremony for the ordinary consulate, although as of the mid-5th century eastern emperors forbade it from being used by anyone except for emperors themselves.⁶⁰ But this legislation was never promulgated in the west, where the Theodosian Code, which granted this right to ordinary consuls, remained in effect.⁶¹ In addition, iconographical depictions of the consular distribution of largess by imperial

militarem, sed, chlamydis terrore deposito, quieta colobiorum ac penularum induat vestimenta.

57 Joh. Lyd. *De mag.* 1.17; see Jullien, "Processus," 152.

58 Wallace-Hadrill, *Long-Haired Kings*, 175–76: "A consular procession should have been in a chariot and not on horseback."

59 Note also the description by Sidonius Apollinaris (*Epist.* 4.20.1) of the *adventus* ceremony at Lyon of the Frankish or Burgundian prince Sigismar in the 460s: *Cum tamen magis hoc ibi decorum conspiceretur . . . flammeus cocco rutilus auro lacteus serico.* For the equivalence of the chlamys and paludamentum, see, e.g., Tac. *Ann.* 12.56; also Brightman, "Coronations," 392; Alföldi, "Insignien," 66; Oost, *Placidia* 120n157; and Stein, "Anfängen," 321.

60 See Wallace-Hadrill, *Long-Haired Kings*, 175–76: "Only the throwing of gold and silver was typically consular"; and Schmidt, "Anfängen," 320. Prohibited under Marcian (450–57), viz. CJ 12.3.2: *cessante ergo ista spargendi vilitati amplissimi consules procedentes deinceps abstineant*, prohibition repeated in *Nov. Just.* 105.

61 *CTh* 15.9.1 (384): *Imppp. Valentinianus, Theodosius et Arcadius AAA. Ad senatum. nulli privatorum liceat holosericeam vestem sub qualibet editione largiri. illud etiam constitutione solidamus, ut exceptis consulibus ordinariis nulli prorsus alteri auream sportulam, diptycha ex ebore dandi facultas sit.*



Fig. 5: Emperor Justinian (527–65) wearing an elaborate diadem and two patricians wearing the chlamys in a mosaic of 548 C.E. in the Church of San Vitale in Ravenna. The emperor's chlamys was of purple, and the patricians' had a broad purple stripe (cf. fig. 3). When worn in this fashion, the only part of a tunic worn underneath that could have been seen was a single arm. Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Justinian_mosaik_ravenna.jpg.

consuls always show the consul seated (fig. 7), not on horseback. Nevertheless, even though Clovis was on horseback and was not an ordinary consul, there is no reason to suppose that, as honorary consul, he would not have borrowed an aspect of consular ceremony so well designed to demonstrate munificence.⁶² But, in general, the associations of the Tours ceremony with the consulate, as opposed to the patriciate, a traditional *adventus* ritual, or even something else,

⁶² An ad hoc display also performed later by Belisarius during his *adventus* into Syracuse on 31 December 535, the last day of his consulate, when he “threw coins of gold to all” (Procop. *Bell.* 5.5.18–19).



Fig. 6: Adventus into Rome in 357 C.E. on horseback of Constantius II wearing the diadem. The chlamys is flung over the left arm, revealing the military garb underneath, with legend *FELIX ADVENTVS AVG(usti) N(ostri)*; 1.5-solidus medallion issued at Rome. Source: J-C, Tkalec AG Auction 2001, 19 Feb. 2001, no. 380.

are quite weak.⁶³ And any association with a triumph, with which Clovis's ceremony in fact had no analogies, given that triumphators wore the *trabea* not the chlamys and rode in a chariot not on horseback, is even weaker.⁶⁴

The Byzantine Connection

That now brings one to the diadem, and this is where a real crux in this passage lies, for, as one commentator has stated, "The word usually has imperial connotations."⁶⁵ Gregory refers to the use of the *diadema* in only two other places in his *Histories*, both referring to the accessions of Byzantine emperors:

⁶³ For a heavier emphasis on the consular aspects of the ceremony, see Hauck, "Randkultur," 20–26; and McCormick, "Clovis," 157.

⁶⁴ Contra Hen, "Clovis," 274: "To create the impression of a Roman triumphal ceremony."

⁶⁵ McCormick, "Clovis," 158.



Fig. 7: On the Arch of Constantine, dignitaries hold out a fold of their togas as Constantine (seated) distributes largesse during his consulate of 312 C.E. (In this case, the emperor distributes largesse with his own hand, unlike the Principate, when the distribution was carried out by *dispensatores*; see F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC–AD 337)* [Ithaca, 1977], 136–37.) Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:StoryN_5.jpg.

Tiberius II in 578 and Maurice in 582.⁶⁶ He thus clearly associated the use of the diadem with imperial accessions in the eastern empire. Thus, in order to hope to understand the significance of the diadem, one must look to the east. In this regard, scholarly interpretations run the full gamut of possibilities, ranging from seeing the ceremony as primarily Byzantine based and consistent with Byzantine policies,⁶⁷ to viewing it as a “challenge to imperial authority . . . [with] gestures bordering on usurpation.”⁶⁸ And in some cases, if one can trust the iconography, barbarian kings, such as those of the Vandals, did in fact simply usurp the right to wear the diadem (fig. 8).⁶⁹

But before accusing Gregory of having grossly misunderstood or misrepresented the ceremony on the one hand or Clovis of an attempt to usurp imperial rank on the other, one might want to consider some other options.

⁶⁶ Greg. *Hist.* 5.30 (578): *Dehinc indutus purpura, diademate coronatus, throno imperiali impositus*; 6.30 (582): *Mauricius indutus diademate et purpura*. The reference at *Hist.* 1.47 is metaphorical.

⁶⁷ As Hauck, “Randkultur,” 20–54.

⁶⁸ McCormick, “Clovis,” 158.

⁶⁹ Stein, “Anfangen,” 321; W. Hahn, *Moneta imperii byzantini* (Vienna, 1973), 94–95; C. Courtois, *Les Vandals et l'Afrique* (Paris, 1955), 243n5.



Fig. 8: A silver *siliqua* of the Vandal king Hilderic (523–30) depicts him sporting the diadem, with the legend *D(ominus) N(oster) HILDIRIX REX*. Source: Numismatik Lanz, sale 123, 30 May 2005, no. 1095.

Among the Romans, the diadem was appropriate for neither the patriciate nor the consulate, only for emperors. It thus is difficult to see the Tours ceremony as representing only grants of the patriciate and the honorary consulate and nothing else. There must have been something else going on, something that involved a purple garment and a diadem, both of which were intimately associated with Roman imperial coronations.⁷⁰ In Ammianus's discussion of the

⁷⁰ See Amm. 26.2.3; Oros. *Hist. adv. pag.* 7.40.6; Procop. *Bell. Vand.* 1.2.28; Jer. *Epist.* 107.2–3; Const. Porph. *De cer.* 1.91–92. For the wearing of a purple garment as equivalent to usurpation, see Sid. Apoll. *Epist.* 1.7.19: *Cognoscens posse reum majestatis pronuntiari etiam eum qui non affectasset habitum purpuratorum*. See in general A. E. R. Boak, "Imperial Coronation Ceremonies of the Fifth and Sixth Centuries," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 30 (1919): 37–47; W. Ensslin, *Zur Frage nach der ersten Kaiserkrönung durch den Patriarchen und zur Bedeutung dieses Aktes im Wahlzeremoniell* (Würzburg, 1947); F. E. Brightman, "Byzantine Imperial Coronations," *Journal of Theological Studies* 2 (1901): 359–92; P. Charanis, "Coronation and Its Constitutional Significance in the Later Roman Empire," *Byzantion* 15 (1940–41): 49–66; W. Sickel, "Das byzantinische Krönungsrecht bis zum 10. Jahrhundert," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 7 (1898): 511–57; and Kai Trampedach, "Kaiserwechsel und Krönungsritual im Konstantinopel des 5. bis 6. Jahrhunderts," in *Investitur und Krönungsrituale: Herrschaftseinsetzungen im kulturellen Vergleich*, ed. Stefan Weinfurter (Cologne: Böhlau, 2005), 275–90. MacCormack, *Ceremony*, 252, suggests that wearing the chlamys was

acclamation of Julian as Augustus in 360, for example, the wearing of the diadem was the operative act of succession that placed the seal of approval upon being hailed as Augustus: "And placed on an infantry shield and lifted on high,⁷¹ having been saluted as Augustus by all,⁷² he was ordered to bring forth a diadem. When he denied ever having one, a soldier of the Petulantes removed the torque that he used as standard-bearer and boldly placed it on Julian's head, and Julian promised to each five gold pieces and a pound of silver."⁷³ This ad hoc assumption of the emperorship at least was carried out in a soldierly fashion.

Ammianus's account of the acclamation of Procopius at Constantinople in 365 was even more irregular. In 363 Julian was said to have given his relative Procopius a purple paludamentum (i.e., chlamys).⁷⁴ Then, two years later, Procopius stage-managed his ill-planned and ill-starred usurpation: "With a paludamentum nowhere to be found, he was garbed in a tunic embroidered with gold, like a palace official . . . his feet were covered in purple bindings, he carried a spear and bore a purple patch in his left hand."⁷⁵ One wonders what had happened to the purple paludamentum. Most likely, Procopius thought it just as potentially dangerous to keep a purple paludamentum in his closet as Julian had considered it to keep a diadem in his.

Given the significant role of a purple garment and the diadem in Gregory's account of the ceremony at Tours, one thus might ask whether the Tours ceremony might also have been in some sense a coronation ceremony.⁷⁶

the "operative act of accession." Likewise for the purple *paludamentum*, see Brightman, "Coronations," 364; Alföldi, "Insignien," 49–50.

71 A standard late Roman practice, as observed at the acclamation of Leo I at Constantinople in 457: Theoph. *Chron.* AM 5961; see Hans Teitler, "Raising on a Shield: Origin and Afterlife of a Coronation Ceremony," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 8 (2002): 501–21.

72 Sometimes the order was reversed: Zos. *HN* 2.42.2–5: "Magnentius rose from table and left the room; he presently returned . . . clothed in an imperial robe. Upon this all the guests saluted him with the title of king."

73 Amm. 20.4.14–18: *Augustum Iulianum horrendis clamoribus concrepabant . . . inpositusque scuto pedestri et sublatius eminens nullo silente Augustus renuntiatus iubebatur diadema proferre, negansque umquam habuisse . . . Petulantium tunc hastatus, abstractum sibi torquem, quo ut draconarius utebatur, capiti Iuliani inposuit confidenter . . . quinos omnibus aureos argenticque singula pondo, promisit.* This was the standard donative amount. On his accession in 457, Leo I likewise promised five gold pieces and a pound of silver as *augoustiaka* (Const. Porph. *De caerim.* 1.94).

74 Amm. 23.3.2: *Dicitur . . . occulte paludamentum purpureum propinquo suo tradidisse Procopio.*

75 Amm. 26.6.15: *Nusquam reperto paludamento, tunica auro distincta ut regius minister indutus . . . purpureis opertus tegminibus pedum, hastatusque purpureum itidem pannulum laeva manu gestabat.*

76 Wallace-Hadrill, *Long-Haired Kings*, 175, thinks that Gregory thought that the emperor had sent the diadem; and Verseuil, *Clovis*, 159–60, suggests that the diadem made

Certainly, in the middle of the 5th century, the Gallic author Polemius Silvius, using some of the same words as Gregory, said that Emperor Domitian (81–96) wore a *chlamydem blatteam* and Constantine the diadem, in a ceremony “that is still observed until this day.”⁷⁷ Emperors also customarily assumed the consulate at the first opportunity.⁷⁸ And, in such a case, the distribution of gold and silver could be analogous to the distribution of a gold and silver *donativum*.

It probably is no coincidence that the very next event of Gregory’s history (*Hist.* 2.40)⁷⁹ deals with Clovis’s expansion of his authority over the Franks. First on his menu was King Sigibert the Lambe of Cologne. After Sigibert and his son Chloderic had been disposed of, Gregory continues, Sigibert’s people “raised him on a shield and made him their king” (fig. 9).⁸⁰ In the following two chapters, Clovis likewise absorbed the kingdoms not only of the Frankish kings Chararic and Ragnacharius of Cambrai, but also of “many other kings” (*Hist.* 2.41–42). It is hard to escape the conclusion that Gregory wished all these events to be connected: the defeat of Alaric II at Vouillé, the receipt of some form of Byzantine acknowledgment at Tours in the following year, and Clovis’s subsequent consolidation of his rule over all of the Franks.

But how far did Byzantine acknowledgment go? Some have suggested that it involved imperial recognition of Clovis’s rule over his new expanded kingdom.⁸¹ And it may well be that Anastasius’s display of favor went beyond simply granting imperial ranks and extended to a formal grant of status as a client king, something that Roman emperors had been quite accustomed to do in their past relations with northern barbarian chieftains (figs. 10–11).⁸²

Clovis the legitimate king of the conquered territories and that Anastasius sent him the *vestis regia*.

77 *Domitianus primus chlamydem blatteam, Diocletianus gemmas vestibus habitus regalis inserere, vel Constantinus senior . . . diadema capiti suo propter refluentes de fronte propria capillos . . . invenit: qui modus hodie custoditur* (Polem. Silv. *Brev. temp.*: MGH AA 9.547).

78 Traditionally on 1 January, see MacCormack, *Ceremony*, 226; Macmullen, *Corruption*, 226. After falling into desuetude, the practice was renewed in 566 by Justin II: Corippus, *Just.* 4.1 ff.; also *CLRE* 12.

79 *Hist.* 2.39 notes the accession of Bishop Licinius of Tours, who Gregory stresses was bishop at the time of Clovis’s visit to Tours.

80 Greg. *Hist.* 2.40: *Eum clypeo evectum super se regem constituunt. Regnumque Sigiberti acceptum cum thesauris, ipsos quoque suae ditioni ascivit*. Note also 4.51 on Sigebert I (561–75): *Collectus est ad eum impositumque super clipeum sibi regem statuunt*. See Teitler, “Raising,” 514, for a possible Byzantine model for the Frankish practice.

81 E.g., Hauck, “Randkultur,” 44: “Zu der kaiserlichen Bestätigung von Chlodwigs neuem Grosskönigtums.”

82 See E. Swoboda, “Rex Quadis Datus,” *Carnuntum Jahrbuch* 2 (1956): 5–12; also, more generally, Lynn F. Pitts, “Relations between Rome and the German ‘Kings’ on the Middle Danube from the First to Fourth Centuries A.D.,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 79 (1989): 45–58; and David Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King: The Character of the Client Kingship* (Taylor & Francis, 1984).



Fig. 9: An 1848 engraving depicts Clovis being raised on a shield at Cologne after the death of Sigibert the Lambe. Source: M. Chevalier (designer) and J. H. Brightly (engraver), in John Frost, *Pictorial History of the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: Moore, 1848), 38.

Against this background, one might consider imperial grants of royal-cum-imperial regalia to post-Roman barbarian kings. In 497, for example, Theoderic the Ostrogoth received from Anastasius the *vestis regia*, that is, the royal regalia and garments, whatever that entailed.⁸³ According to Procopius, “He used neither the title of Augustus nor the purple,”⁸⁴ but this did not prevent enthusiastic, and perhaps uninformed, supporters from referring to him as both *rex* and *Augustus* at the same time,⁸⁵ just as some at Tours had hailed Clovis “as if he were a consul or an Augustus.”⁸⁶

83 *Vestem . . . regiam* (Anon. val. 11.53, the request of 490); *facta pace cum Anastasio imperatore per Festum de praesumptione regni, et omnia ornamenta palatii, quae Odoacer Constantinopolim transmisserat, remittit* (ibid., 12.64, 497).

84 Procop. *BG* 1.1.26.

85 CIL 10.6850–51 = Dessau, *ILS* no. 827, *D(ominus) n(oster) gl(ori)o(s)(i)mus adq(ue) inclyt(us) rex Theodericus vict(or) ac triumph(ator) semper Aug(ustus) bono r(ei) p(ublicae) natus, custos libertatis et propagator Rom(ani) nom(inis) domitor g(en)tium*.

86 One might note, at the same time that one might doubt whether onlookers would have been aware of this, that a patrician also was known as *pater Augusti*, that is, “father of the emperor”: see CJ 12.3.5 (531–33): *patricios, quos in huiusmodi dignitatis apicem augusta*

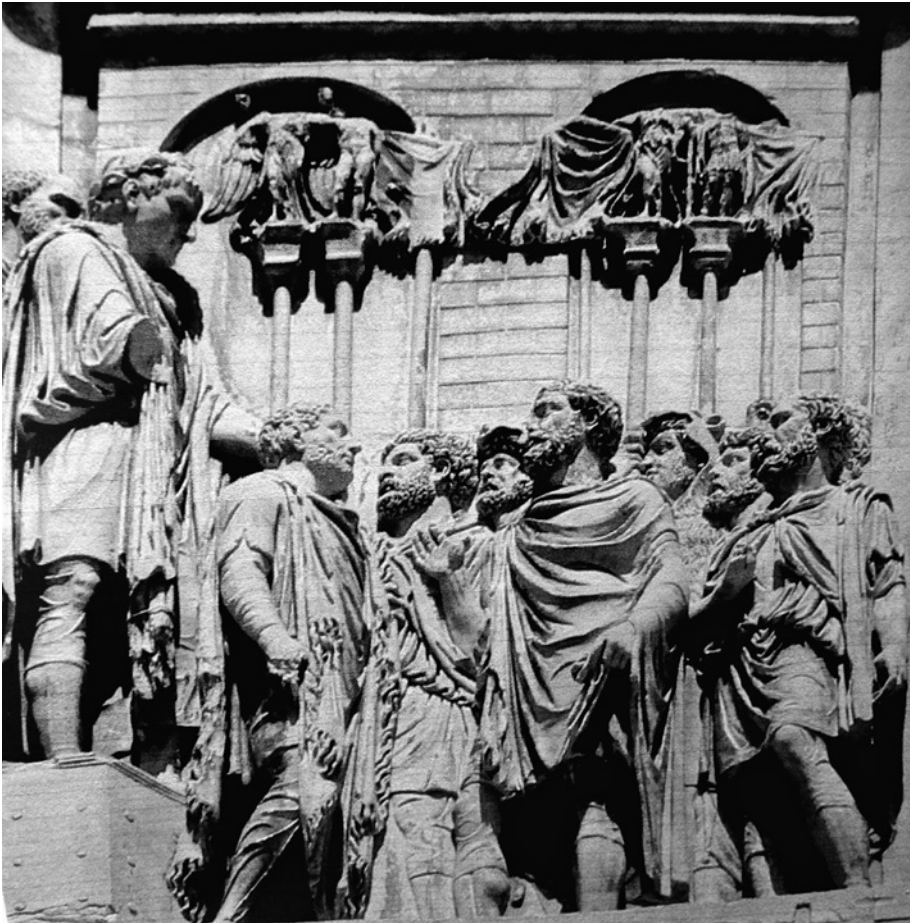


Fig. 10: In a *rex datus* panel from the Arch of Constantine, a 2nd-century emperor at left, perhaps Trajan, invests a bearded and ceremonially dressed client king. See A. L. Frothingham, "Who Built the Arch of Constantine? III: The Attic," *American Journal of Archaeology* 19 (1915): 1–12 at 1–2. Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b8/Roma_Arch_Constantine_Detail2.jpg; permission granted by Rita 1234 under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.

maiestas rettulerit, ilico ab imperialibus codicillis praestitis patres familias effici ac potestate liberari paterna, ne videantur, qui a nobis loco patris honorantur; see also Claud. In *Eutrop.* 2.68–69 (a witticism): *genitorque vocatur . . . principis, et famulum dignatur regia patrem*; Joh. Lyd. *De mag.* 72.3; Corrip. *Iust.* 4.332–33: *patricius . . . qui pater imperii meruit iam factus haberi*. For *parens principis*, see J. Straub, "Parens principum," *La nouvelle Clío* 4 (1952): 94–115; and note *ILS* 801: *parenti invictissimorum principum . . . patricio*. The patricians also participated in the coronation of an emperor: Const. Porph. *De cerim.* 1.91. Nor did Gregory refrain elsewhere from comparing Clovis to Constantine I: *Hist.* 2.31: *procedit novus Constantinus ad lavacrum*.



Fig. 11: A *sestertius* of Antoninus Pius (138–61) depicts a client king of the Quadi, with the legend *REX QVADIS DATVS* (“A king is given to the Quadi”). Source: H. A. Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1923), 4.204–5, Antoninus Pius nos. 1274–75, pl. 29.8.

A fuller description of the types of honors granted to Byzantine client kings is provided by Agathias, who recounts how, in 555/556, Tzath, the king of the Lazi, received from Emperor Justinian “a golden crown [*stephanos*] decorated with precious stones, a robe interwoven with gold extending to the ankles, purple-dyed footwear, and a miter likewise decorated by gold and jewels. It was not proper, however, for the kings of the Lazi to wear a purple chlamys, only a white one . . . the regal fibula of the chlamys was noteworthy for gems, golden pendants, and other finery.”⁸⁷ This passage might help to elucidate some of the cruxes in Gregory’s account. For one thing, the nonpurple chlamys accorded to Tzath would be equivalent to the chlamys of a patrician—white with a purple stripe—granted to Clovis.

And a golden crown such as that granted to Tzath easily could have been interpreted by onlookers—and later Gregory—as an imperial diadem. Later Gallic writers, however, even when copying directly from Gregory, all believed that Clovis had received a golden crown, not a diadem. In the summary of Gregory’s account in the *Liber historiae francorum*, for example, written about

87 Agathias, *Hist.* 3.15; Ensslin, “Nochmals,” 505.

140 years later, Gregory's *diadema* was described as a *corona aurea*.⁸⁸ Likewise, in the 9th century Hincmar of Reims, in his life of Remigius, presented his own version of Gregory's account,⁸⁹ in which Gregory's diadem likewise was replaced by a "jeweled golden crown."⁹⁰ Hincmar then took the story one step further, continuing, "In the time of the pontificate of the sainted Hormisdas, the aforementioned glorious King Clovis sent to Saint Peter, at Remigius's suggestion, a crown, of gold with gems, which was usually called 'Kingship' [*Regnum* or *Regnus*]."⁹¹ This report is repeated in the *Liber pontificalis*, which reports, for the papacy of Hormisdas (514–23), "The 'Kingship,' with precious gems, came from the king of the Franks, the Christian Clovis, as a gift for the blessed apostle Peter."⁹² A chronological problem with this report is that Clovis died in 511 and the papacy of Hormisdas did not begin until 514, but the three-year gap could be resolved if the gift were sent in the name of Clovis, or at the earlier request of Clovis (with the encouragement of Remigius), or even as a bequest in Clovis's will.

It should be no surprise, perhaps, if Gregory of Tours, knowing that it had come from Anastasius, interpreted a golden crown signifying regal status as a diadem. Anastasius's gift certainly was understood in later generations to have been a *corona aurea*, something that would have been consistent with Clovis having been named a client king.⁹³ One also might be tempted to speculate that the golden jewel-encrusted crown sent to Hormisdas, which was described in the *Vita Remigii* and *Liber pontificalis* in exactly the same way as the crown sent by Anastasius, may in fact have been that very same crown. The nickname given to that crown, "Kingship," would have been absolutely appropriate to the crown sent by Anastasius. And to make a dedication of this sort on his home territory could not have been interpreted but as a challenge to Theoderic the Ostrogoth,

88 LHF 17 (MGH SRM 2.2.271): *tamquam consul aut augustus*.

89 For the *vita's* reliability, see A. H. M. Jones, P. Grierson, J. Crook, "The Authenticity of the 'Testamentum s. Remigii,'" *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 35 (1957): 356–73, rejecting the typically curmudgeonly view of the MGH editor Bruno Krusch (MGH SRM 3.336–47).

90 *Vita Remigii* 20 (MGH SRM 3.311–12): *Per idem tempus ab Anastasio imperatore codicellos Hludowicus rex pro consolatui accepit, cum quibus codicellis etiam illi Anastasius coronam auream cum gemmis et tunicam blatteam misit, et ab ea die consul et augustus est appellatus*.

91 *Vita Remigii* 20: *Huius sancti Hormisdæ pontificatus tempore saepe fatus Hludowicus rex gloriosus coronam auream cum gemmis, quae Regnum appellari solet, beato Petro, sancto Remigio suggerente, direxit*.

92 *Lib. pont.* 54.10 (Hormisdas): Louis Duchesne, ed., *Liber Pontificalis* (Paris, 1886–92), 1.271: *Eodem tempore venit Regnus cum gemmis praeiosius a rege Francorum Cloduueum christianum, donum beato Petro apostolo*.

93 One almost might wonder whether these writers used a now-lost version of Gregory that specified a *corona aurea* and not a *diadema*.

whose influence over Hormisdas was so explicitly stressed in the *Liber pontificalis*,⁹⁴ and as a statement that Clovis was every bit Theoderic's equal.

In the same vein, a grant by Anastasius of *vestis regia*, including the purple garments regarding which his father-in-law Theoderic was so concerned,⁹⁵ even if Gregory did not call it that, to Clovis would have had the additional benefit of raising Clovis's stature as close as possible to that of Theoderic⁹⁶ and even further above that of Gundobad. Clovis and Theoderic both had received the patriciate, the consulate, and a form of *vestis regia* from Anastasius. In this model, Gundobad, moreover, was the odd man out, now squeezed between Theoderic in the south and Clovis in the north.

Clovis's role as a Byzantine client also can help to nuance our understanding of the only contemporary reference to Anastasius's interest in Clovis's activities, as preserved in a letter of Bishop Avitus of Vienne to Clovis. The manuscript reading of a very problematic passage in this letter states: *Gaudeat equidem Graecia principem legisse nostrum sed non iam quae tanti muneris donum sola mereatur* ("Let Greece indeed rejoice to have chosen our ruler, but she is no longer the only one to merit the gift of so great a benefit").⁹⁷ For various philological and historical reasons, however, and in particular the fact that Clovis was not Avitus's ruler, this reading leaves much to be desired.⁹⁸ It has been suggested, therefore, that a reading of the first clause preserved in Sirmond's *editio princeps* of 1643 that seems to have come from a different, now lost, manuscript copy of the letters, is to be preferred, *Gaudeat ergo quidem Graecia habere se principem legis nostrae* ("Therefore, let Greece, to be sure, rejoice in having an orthodox ruler, but she no longer is the only one to deserve so great a gift").⁹⁹ But this version, too, with its stress on Anastasius's orthodoxy, is not without its problems, given Anastasius's known Miaphysite preferences.¹⁰⁰

94 E.g., *Lib. pont.* 54.2: *cum consilio regis Theodorici*; 54.5: *cum consilio regis Theodorici*; 54.8: *Hormisda perrexit ad regem Theodoricum Ravenna et cum eius consilio*.

95 Cass. *Variae* 1.2, where Theoderic requests *blatta* for *nostrum cubiculum*, made by an Ostrogothic purple dye industry that was no longer dependent on Byzantine favor.

96 See also Mathisen, "Clovis"; and Becher, *Chlodwig I*, 237.

97 Avit. *Epist.* 46; the reading of MGH AA 6.2.75. The letters survive in only a single manuscript, Lyon Bib. mun. 618 (535). For discussion of this passage, see D. R. Shanzer, "Dating the Baptism of Clovis: The Bishop of Vienne vs. the Bishop of Tours," *Early Medieval Europe* 7 (1998): 29–57; and D. R. Shanzer and I. N. Wood, eds., *Avitus of Vienne: Selected Letters and Prose*, TTH 38 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002), 362–73.

98 See Shanzer, "Dating the Baptism of Clovis," 38–41; Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 365–66.

99 Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 370, retaining the manuscript version of the second clause. Sirmond's version of the second clause, *sed non iam quae tanti muneris dono sola mereatur illustrari*, was favored in Shanzer, "Dating the Baptism of Clovis," 41.

A question that never has been satisfactorily answered is why the Byzantine Empire suddenly shows up, out of the blue, in this letter. After an introductory paragraph in which Gregory contrasted the pagan beliefs of Clovis's ancestors and people with Clovis's own Christianity, Gregory suddenly changes gears, in an apparent non sequitur: "Therefore, let Greece rejoice. . . . Now her bright glory also adorns the world, because, indeed, in the person of a king in the west the radiance of an old light shines forth."¹⁰¹ What is the connection and the context? The answer might lie in the final sentence of the letter as it survives (it seems to break off *in medias res*): "To whatever extent that foreign pagan peoples, too, are going to serve you for the first time for the sake of the power of your religion, seeing that hitherto they seem to have different characteristics, let them be distinguished [from each other] by their *gens* rather than by their ruler [*principe*]."¹⁰²

This vision of Clovis as the *princeps* of several barbarian *gentes* could be seen as analogous to Theoderic's portrayal of himself likewise as a *princeps* (fig. 12).¹⁰³ And Avitus's suggestion that Clovis now would extend his authority over neighboring barbarian peoples may well reflect the go-ahead that was implicit not only in Clovis's adoption of Nicene Christianity, which allowed him to share in the "glory of Greece," but also in Anastasius's grant of client status. From both political and religious perspectives, therefore, Clovis could draw support from the Byzantine Empire for his imperialistic expansion of authority over other barbarian peoples. Indeed, Gregory's concluding remark in his discussion of the Tours ceremony, "Then he departed from Tours and came to Paris, and there he fixed the seat of the kingdom," suggests that he connected Clovis's receipt of Byzantine honors directly with the formal inception of Clovis's extended Frankish kingdom. And such a connection between Frankish rule and the Byzantine Empire continued to be maintained well into the 6th

100 See Bury, *Later Roman Empire*, 1.436: "His personal predilections were Monophysitic." Shanzer, "Dating the Baptism of Clovis," 42, assumes that Anastasius was indeed "Catholic," but Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 365–66, suggest that "Avitus was certainly confused" regarding Anastasius's orthodoxy.

101 Avit. *Epist.* 46: *Illustrat tum quoque orbem claritas sua, et occiduis partibus in rege non novi iubaris lumen effulgerat* (MGH AA 6.2.75); cf. *Quod non desit et reliquo orbi claritas sua, si quidem et occiduis partibus in rege non novo novi iubaris lumen effulgurat* (reading of Sirmond in *PL*).

102 Avit. *Epist.* 46: *Quatenus externi quoque populi paganorum pro religionis vobis primitus imperio servituri, dum adhuc aliam videntur habere proprietatem, discernantur potius gente quam principe* (MGH AA 6.2.76). Sirmond reads *discernant potius gentem quam principem*.

103 For the suggestion that being hailed as "augustus" was equivalent to being "une sorte de princeps," see Guillot, "Clovis," 724.



Fig. 12: A triple-solidus medallion issued by Theoderic the Ostrogoth in 522 giving him the title *Princeps* with the legend *REX THEODERICVS PIVS PRINCIS*. Palazzo Massimo alle Terme, Rome. Source: R. W. Mathisen.

century, for in the mid-6th century Procopius asserted, “The Franks were not in safe possession of Gaul unless the emperor had signed off on this act.”¹⁰⁴

Conclusion

The preceding analysis suggests that, with allowances made for the passage of time and for some understandable uncertainties over the policies of both Anastasius and Clovis, Gregory’s account of the ceremony at Tours in 508 is substantially correct and reflects the political realities of the times. Some scholars have seen the ceremony of Tours as a barbaric copy of a Roman ceremony, that is, as a kind of *imitatio imperii*.¹⁰⁵ But this would seem not to have been the case. As already demonstrated, the analogy of Clovis’s ceremony with that of Roman consuls or triumphators was remote at best. In addition, Clovis’s assumption of imperial-looking regalia, the diadem and a purple garment, in a church anticipated the Byzantine process by nearly a hundred

¹⁰⁴ Procop. *Bell.* 7.33.4.

¹⁰⁵ E.g., McCormick, “Clovis,” 163: *imitatio imperii*; Steven Fanning, “Clovis Augustus and Merovingian *Imitatio imperii*,” in *The World of Gregory of Tours*, ed. Kathleen Mitchell and I. N. Wood (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 321–35.

years. Traditionally, Byzantine emperors assumed office in the hippodrome; the first Byzantine emperor to be crowned in a church was Phocas (602–10), and even then he was crowned by the patriarch, whereas Clovis crowned himself.¹⁰⁶ Thus, there are many Roman ceremonies, such as *adventus*, *processus consularis*, *processus triumphalis*, *assumptio imperii*, and *translatio sanctorum*, with which one could seek analogies, but none comes even close to being a good fit. The best analogy one might make, perhaps, is simply to a generic Roman *adventus* ceremony.¹⁰⁷ It is possible, certainly, that the Romans and barbarians observed similarities to various other Roman ceremonies, but this was just a side effect, and it was not Clovis's intention. No, Clovis was not a historian. He was interested not in the Roman past but in the Frankish future. And he was less interested in imitating vanished Roman officials than in becoming the equal of most powerful barbarian kings.

For Anastasius, on the other hand, Clovis was just as much as a parvenu after his victory at Vouillé in 507 as Theoderic had been ten years earlier and was treated much as client kings had been treated in the past, receiving honors and even their royal rank from the emperor. But as things played out, Anastasius got rather more than he bargained for. Having been given, in essence, the Byzantine green light, both Theoderic and Clovis enthusiastically expanded their kingdoms. As a result of Clovis's victory at Vouillé, Theoderic was able to expand his influence into Spain. And Clovis, having been legitimated by Anastasius after Vouillé,¹⁰⁸ expanded his kingdom to the Rhine and beyond. At the same time, Theoderic nibbled away at the Vandal kingdom, occupying Sicily, and the Burgundians lost territory to the Ostrogoths in the south and the Franks in the north.¹⁰⁹

This was not, however, a policy that subsequent Byzantine emperors followed. In the future—when both the Ostrogoths and Vandals succumbed to Justinian—the kings of neither the Franks nor the Visigoths were granted any

106 *Chron. pasch.* s.a. 602; Theoph. Sim. *Chron.* 8.10.

107 The best fit probably would be a generic form of an *adventus* ceremony. A good fit might be the suggestion of McCormick, "Clovis," 171–72, an analogy to an *adventus* of a Byzantine *magister militum*, who, however, would not have been garbed, as McCormick suggests, as an honorary consul.

108 See Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 49, for Clovis as "the most favored western ally of . . . Anastasius" after 507; also Guillot, "Clovis," 721: "une primauté . . . au catholique Clovis."

109 See, e.g., Christine Delaplace, "La 'Guerre de Provence' (507–11), un épisode oublié de la domination ostrogothique en occident," in *Romanité et cité chrétienne: Permanences et mutations, intégration et exclusion du Ier au VIe siècle: Mélanges en l'honneur d'Yvette Duval* (Paris, 2000), 77–89. For relations between Clovis and Theoderic after 507, see D. Claude, "Clovis, Théodoric et la maîtrise de l'espace entre Rhin et Danube," in Rouche, *Clovis*, 409–20.

further Byzantine honors that could be interpreted as putting the Byzantine stamp of approval on any further territory grabs. That lesson had been learned.

And in this model, the significance of Clovis's victory at Vouillé cannot be overstressed. It was of much greater importance, for example, than Clovis's defeats of either Syagrius or the Alamanni. As a result of Vouillé, Clovis did much more than merely defeat his Visigothic rival Alaric II. He also put himself on the Byzantine radar and was acknowledged not only as a barbarian chieftain worthy of receiving Roman honors, but also as a Byzantine client king. That status, coupled with the religious unity that he also shared with the Byzantine emperor, gave him a political status that placed him on a whole different playing field from the other Frankish petty kings and must have been a prime factor in the ease with which the other Frankish peoples accommodated themselves to his rule. Thus, even though Clovis's adoption of Nicene Christianity usually is cited as one of the primary reasons, if not the primary reason, for his success, one also must appreciate the significance of the political credit that he gained as a result of his victory over the Visigoths. For if one of Clovis's Frankish rivals, whose interests lay only in the north, had unified the Franks, or if Clovis had failed to do so, it is quite possible that northern France would now be a German-speaking area. It might not be too much to suggest that had there been no victory at Vouillé there would have been no united Frankish kingdom and perhaps even no modern French nation.¹¹⁰

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¹¹⁰ For Clovis's role in the creation of France, see, inter alios, Patrick Périn, *Clovis et la naissance de la France* (Sogemo, 1990).

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The Battle of Vouillé and the Restoration of the Roman Empire¹

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Modern accounts often link the Battle of Vouillé with the birth of France.² However, in its immediate aftermath many were claiming something quite different, that a partial restoration of the western Roman Empire had occurred. The idea may seem fanciful at first, especially given the general assumption that there was no longer a western Roman Empire in 507; yet its restoration in southern Gaul was exactly what contemporary Italians were declaring in the wake of this battle. “Rome,” it was claimed, had “gathered back her nurslings to her bosom,” and the Gauls, who now tasted Roman liberty again, had “returned to their homeland, to the *imperium Romanum*.”³ Indeed, though “France” traditionally is thought to have been born as a consequence of Vouillé, contemporary Italian sentiments were quite the opposite. Barbarian Gaul, the Gaul represented by Clovis and others, had been subverted, and a Roman Gaul reborn in its stead. Vouillé, therefore, was as much a victory for Romanness as Frankishness, as much backward-looking as forward.

But, of course, this Roman Empire and the Romans principally responsible for Gaul’s restoration are generally not afforded Roman identities in modern scholarship. This was Ostrogothic Italy; its gains in Gaul, if mentioned at all, Ostrogothic Provence; and its soldiers (though sometimes including Romans), principally Goths. The Visigothic territories acquired as a consequence of Vouillé are thus traditionally understood as creating a Gothic superstate, not a

1 This study is derived from my doctoral dissertation, “Theoderic, the Goths, and the Restoration of the Roman Empire” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2008), esp. chap. 5. I would like to thank Raymond Van Dam (my dissertation chair), Ralph Mathisen, and my wife Raven for their comments, suggestions, and support.

2 See Mathisen, “Clovis,” in this volume.

3 For nurslings, Cass. *Variae* 2.1.2 in T. Mommsen, ed., *Cassiodori Senatoris Variae*, MGH AA 12 (Berlin, 1894), 46: *alumnos proprios ad ubera sua Roma recolligat*; for liberty, Ennodius, no. 447.6 in Fridericus Vogel, ed., *Magni Felicis Ennodii Opera*, MGH AA 7 (Berlin, 1885), 308: *quos ante te non contigit sapor de Romana libertate gustare*, and Cass. *Variae* 3.17.1: *ideo in antiquam libertatem deo praestante revocati*; for returning, *Variae* 3.18.2 (in reference to a certain Magnus): *ad Romanum repatriavit imperium*. N.B. Unless otherwise noted, Vogel’s numbering system has been used throughout in citing Ennodius.

restored Roman Empire.⁴ But while such Gothic appellations may be useful for historical generalization, they are inevitably misleading and inappropriate. Early-6th-century Italy was not “Ostrogothic,” and most telling is the fact that no contemporary source, Italian or otherwise, referred to it as such.⁵ It was not, like Clovis’s Francia, another post-Roman, perhaps better, non-Roman, barbarian kingdom. Despite being denuded of territory and dejected by 5th-century reversals, Italians (and their opinions should be paramount) still considered Italy to be the western Roman Empire, referring to it regularly as the *imperium Romanum*, *res publica Romana*, and *regnum Romanum*.⁶ Indeed, they had every reason to do so. Roman law remained in effect; the machinery of imperial government was intact; and, most important for the Roman aristocracy, the Senate and traditional civil offices like the consulate still survived.⁷ It is true that Odovacar had deposed Romulus Augustus and sent his

- 4 See Herwig Wolfram, *History of the Goths*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Berkeley, 1988), 309–12; and Christine Delaplace, “La ‘Guerre de Provence’ (507–11), un épisode oublié de la domination ostrogothique en Occident,” in *Romanité et cité chrétienne: Permanences et mutations, intégration et exclusion du Ier au VIe siècle: Mélanges en l’honneur d’Yvette Duval* (Paris, 2000), 77–89 at 77. But see also Vito Sirago, “Gli Ostrogoti in Gallia secondo le *Variae* di Cassiodoro,” *REA* 89 (1987): 63–77 at 74; and Pablo Diaz and Rosario Valverde, “Goths Confronting Goths: Ostrogothic Political Relations in Hispania,” in *The Ostrogoths from the Migration Period to the Sixth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. S. Barnish and F. Marazzi (Woodbridge, 2007), 353–76 at 359–60.
- 5 Perhaps the earliest western example can be found in the *Life* of Caesarius of Arles. See *Vitae Caesarii Episcopi Arelatensis Libri Duo* 1.34 in Bruno Krusch, ed., *Passiones vitaeque sanctorum aevi Merovingici et antiquiorum aliquot*, MGH SRM 3 (Hannover, 1896), 470, where the term *Austrogothorum . . . regnum* is used. Earlier, at 1.28, however, Theoderic is described as simply *Italiae rex*. Sources from the mid-6th century onward (i.e., from the Justinianic era and beyond) do refer to Italy as the kingdom of the Goths, but not exclusively. See also Jordanes, *Romana* 349 in T. Mommsen, ed., *Iordanis Romana et Getica*, MGH AA 5.1 (Berlin, 1882), 45: *Theodoricus . . . regnum gentis sui et Romani populi principatum prudenter et pacifice per triginta annos continuit*.
- 6 Despite appearing contradictory to the classically trained, these terms are ubiquitous (and indeed interchangeable) in late Latin sources. For a discussion, see Marc Reydellet, *La Royauté dans la Littérature Latine de Sidoine Apollinaire à Isidore de Séville* (Rome, 1981), 25–26; Stephen Fanning, “Odovacar rex, Regal Terminology, and the Question of the End of the Western Roman Empire,” *Medieval Prosopography* 24 (2003): 45–54; idem, “Emperors and Empires in Fifth-Century Gaul,” in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* ed. J. Drinkwater and H. Elton (Cambridge, 1992), 288–97; and Arnold, “Restoration of the Roman Empire,” 28–29. The Latin texts cited in this paper should make this abundantly clear.
- 7 For the reign of Odovacar, see André Chastagnol, *Le Sénat romain sous le règne d’Odoacre: Recherches sur l’épigraphie du Colisée au 5e siècle* (Bonn, 1966); M. A. Wes, *Das Ende des Kaisertums im Westen des Römischen Reichs* (s-Gravenhage, 1967), chap. 3; and John Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy* (Oxford, 1992), 8–9, 29–31. For the status of Roman law, see (among many others) Patrick Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic*

insignia to Constantinople in 476; but Italians maintained the fiction that there were two Roman realms, and this fiction seemed to become a reality again in 497, when the eastern emperor Anastasius returned Romulus's insignia to Theoderic.⁸

The Ostrogoths, then, had arrived in an Italy that was perceived to be a dying Roman Empire, but not one already dead. And in the decade and a half that followed their advent it became clear to many that they had come not merely to liberate Rome from Odovacar's tyranny, but to invigorate her and restore her to her prior, elevated status.⁹ In Theoderic many Italians received the kind of emperor they wanted, a *princeps*.¹⁰ He was hailed as a second Trajan and Valentinian,¹¹ his acceptance secured by his Roman upbringing in Constantinople, illustrious pedigree, and history of Roman office holding.¹² He looked and acted the part of a Roman emperor,¹³ and some Italians (even some Greeks

Italy, 489–554 (Cambridge, 1997), 51–52; and (more traditionally) Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy*, 75–80. For the continued importance of the Senate, see Filippo Burgarella, "Il Senato," in *Roma nell'alto medioevo*, Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 48 (Spoleto, 2001), 121–75 at 121–57; and Arnold, "Restoration of the Roman Empire," 177–86.

- 8 *Anonymi Valesiani pars posterior* 64 in T. Mommsen, ed., *Chronica Minora Saec. IV. V. VI. VII*, vol. 1, MGH AA 9 (Berlin, 1892), 322: *Facta pace cum Anastasio imperatore per Festum de praesumptione regni, et omnia ornamenta palatii, quae Odoacar Constantinopolim transmiserat, remittit*. For two Roman realms, see generally *Variae* 1.1, with Arnold, "Restoration of the Roman Empire," 64–73; and Jan Prostko-Prostyński, *Utraeque res publicae: The Emperor Anastasius I's Gothic Policy (491–518)* (Poznań, 1994), 85–86, which provides an eastern perspective.
- 9 For restoration of status, see Ennodius, *Panegyricus Dictus Theoderico* 30 in Christian Rohr, ed., *Der Theoderich-Panegyricus des Ennodius*, MGH ST 12 (Hannover, 1995), 220, with the Italian edition and translation of Simona Rota, *Magno Felice Ennodio: Panegirico del clementissimo re Teoderico (opusc. 1)* (Rome, 2002), 200: *te orbis domina ad status sui reparationem Roma poscebat*. Indeed, the most vivid account of Odovacar as a "tyrant" and Theoderic as "liberator" can be found in Ennodius's panegyric. At *Pan.* 42, for instance, Theoderic's sword is called *vindex libertatis* ("defender of liberty"), while at *Pan.* 46, Odovacar and his followers are referred to as *mundi faecem* ("scum of the earth"). See also Jordanes, *Getica* 291 in T. Mommsen, ed., *Iordanis Romana et Getica*, MGH AA 5.1 (Berlin, 1882), 133, where the terms *tyrannide* and *tyrannico iugo* are used in reference to Odovacar.
- 10 The informal (but recognizably imperial) title *princeps* is actually employed more often than *rex* in the *Variae*. For this observation, see Reydellet, *Royaute*, 214. For the importance of this title before an Italian audience, see especially Wes, *Das Ende*, chap. 2; and Mats Cullhed, *Conservator urbis suae: Studies in the Politics and Propaganda of the Emperor Maxentius* (Stockholm, 1994).
- 11 *Anon. Val.* 60: *a Romanis Traianus vel Valentinianus . . . appellaretur*.
- 12 This is discussed extensively in Arnold, "Restoration of the Roman Empire," 118–51. See also Ennodius, *Pan.* 11–18, 88; *Anon. Val.* 49; and Jordanes, *Get.* 289–92 and *Rom.* 348–49.
- 13 The imperial behavior of Theoderic is generally undisputed, but his exact position and regalia (specifically whether he wore a diadem) are not. See (among many others)

for that matter) felt at ease referring to him as such.¹⁴ In the Goths, likewise, many Romans received the unconquerable army they had lacked for most of the 5th century. Even before Vouillé, Goths were being celebrated as heroes,¹⁵ brave men who trained in times of peace lest the Roman Republic be disturbed in times of war.¹⁶ Gothic *ferocitas* became Roman *virtus*, a process not unprecedented in Roman history.¹⁷ But there was more. The Goths were also at times admirably Roman, not just defending the Roman way of life, but actually living it. The “noble Goth,” as Theoderic famously claimed, “imitated the Roman,”¹⁸ while rank-and-file Goths, common soldiers, “adopted the prudence of the Romans, while possessing the valor of the *gentes*.”¹⁹ Goths, it was said, were “modest,” not bellicose, at home; they obeyed the laws and were even proposed as models of proper conduct to Italians and provincials alike.²⁰

Once barbarous, the “Getic race of Mars” was now celebrated for having “reinvigorated the effeminate toga.”²¹ Portions of Italy, so recently ravaged, were

Wilhelm Ensslin, *Theoderich der Grosse* (Munich, 1959), 152–59; A. H. M. Jones, “The Constitutional Position of Odoacer and Theoderic,” *JRS* 52 (1962): 126–30; Wolfram, *Goths*, 288–90, 306–7; Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy*, 39–51; Prostko-Prostyński, *Utræque res publicæ*, 149–68; Peter Heather, *The Goths* (Oxford, 1996), 221–35; and Arnold, “Restoration of the Roman Empire,” chap. 2.

- 14 See above for Theoderic as *princeps*. For Theoderic as Augustus, see *ILS* 827 (cited below) and Ennodius, *Pan.* 7: *augustior*; for Theoderic as Emperor, Ennodius, *Vita Epifani* 143, ed. Vogel, 102: *omnes retro imperatores*; Ennodius, *Vita Epifani* 187: *boni imperatoris*; Ennodius, *Libellus pro synodo* 36, ed. Vogel, 53: *imperialis . . . auctoritas*; Ennodius, *Libellus pro synodo* 73: *imperialia . . . scripta*; Ennodius, *Libellus pro synodo* 74: *imperatoris nostri*; Ennodius, no. 447.5: *quando non indiget imperator*. For Greeks and east Romans, see Procop. *Wars* 5.1.26–27; Theophanes, *Chronographia*, *AM* 5931, ed. Carl de Boor (Leipzig, 1883), 1.94; and Jordanes, *Rom.* 349 (cited above).
- 15 Ennodius, *Pan.* 87: *heroas tuos*.
- 16 Ennodius, *Pan.* 83: *quod Getici instrumenta roboris, dum provides ne interpellentur otia nostra, custodis et pubem indomitam sub oculis tuis inter bona tranquillitatis facis bella proludere*.
- 17 See the famous case of the Visigoth Athaulf, recorded in Orosius, *Historiae* 7.43.6: *ut gloriam sibi de restituendo in integrum augendoque Romano nomine Gothorum viribus quaereret habereturque apud posteros Romanae restitutionis auctor*.
- 18 Anon. *Val.* 61: *utilis Gothus imitatur Romanum*.
- 19 *Variae* 3.23.3: *Qui sic semper fuerunt in laudum medio constituti, ut et Romanorum prudentiam caperent et virtutem gentium possiderent*.
- 20 *Variae* 3.24.4: *imitamini certe Gothos nostros, qui foris proelia, intus norunt exercere modestiam*. See also *Variae* 3.23.3: *Gothorum possis demonstrare iustitiam*; and Ennodius, *Pan.* 83–87, which describes valiant Goths training for war and obeying the law.
- 21 For effeminate toga, *Variae* 8.10.1: *auctus est enim pacis genius de ferri radiantis ornatu nec discincta iacet toga iam procinctualis effecta*; for race of Mars, *Variae* 8.10.11: *convenit gentem Romuleam Martios viros habere collegas* (literally “men of Mars”). The letter refers to the Goth Tuluin, who had proven his valor during Theoderic’s reconquest of Gaul. For Tuluin, see J. Martindale, *PLRE* 2.1131–33. Cf. Ennodius, *Pan.* 15–16, where Theoderic has similar effects on his consular robes.

said to “live again,”²² and by 507 Ennodius was literally hailing the “good condition of the Republic.”²³ In his panegyric to Theoderic he described an Italy in which “unforeseen beauty” had come forth “from the ashes of cities”; in which a personified Rome, once decrepit and “slipping in her tracks,” had become “young again”; in which the “Senate’s crown” was “wrapped with innumerable flowers.”²⁴ Italy seemed renewed and rejuvenated, but the western empire’s recovery extended beyond the Italian peninsula. Rome had tasted victory again, reclaiming lost territories in the Balkans. This region had long been a source of friction between eastern and western empires. Cassiodorus, for instance, remembered the 5th-century loss of territories here as a “lamentable division” that had “indecently impaired the empire.”²⁵ But now, as a consequence of an invasion launched in 504, portions of Pannonia Secunda had been reattached to the west.²⁶ The event was significant and a preview of the Gallic restoration to come. “Roman powers,” Ennodius exclaimed, “return to their [former] limits,” and Theoderic dictated instructions to these Pannonians “in the custom of our ancestors.”²⁷ The instructions themselves were also suggestive. In one letter the ruler of Italy admonished these new provincials to live by the rule of law, to act civilly, and to give up barbarous practices such as the trial-by-arms.²⁸ Even before Vouillé, it seemed, Theoderic and his Goths had

22 *Vita Epifani* 141: *polliceor tibi redivivum statum Liguriaie*, a promise later fulfilled. See also Ennodius, *Eucharisticon* (no. 438.20), ed. Vogel, 303: *tempore quo Italiam optatissimus Theoderici regis resuscitavit ingressus*.

23 Ennodius, *Pan.* 5: *Salve, status reipublicae*.

24 For unforeseen beauty, *Pan.* 56: *video insperatum decorem urbium cineribus evenisse*; Rome slipping, *Pan.* 48: *Illic vellem ut aetatis inmemor, Roma, conmeares. Si venires lapsantibus tremebunda vestigiis, aevum gaudia conmutarent*; Rome rejuvenated, *Pan.* 56: *Roma iuveniscit*; Senate’s crown, *Pan.* 57: *quod coronam curiae innumero flore velasti*. On the *renovatio urbium* of the Theoderican epoch, see (among others) Ensslin, *Theoderich*, 248–62; Mark Johnson, “Toward a History of Theoderic’s Building Program,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 42 (1988): 73–96; Letizia Pani Ermini, “*Forma urbis e renovatio murorum* in età teodericana,” in *Teoderico e i Goti tra Oriente e Occidente*, ed. A. Carile (Ravenna, 1995), 171–225; and Gian Pietro Brogiolo, “Edilizia residenziale di età gota in Italia settentrionale,” in *I Goti* (Milan, 1994), 214–21.

25 *Variae* 11.1.9: *amissione Illyrici comparavit factaque est coniunctio regnantis divisio dolenda provinciis*.

26 Indeed, even parts of Moesia Prima, a territory not traditionally assigned to the west, seem to have fallen to the Ostrogoths. See Wolfram, *Goths*, 321–22.

27 *Pan.* 69: *interea ad limitem suum Romana regna remearunt: dictas more veterum praecepta Sermiensibus*.

28 See *Variae* 3.24.3–4: *Illud praeterea vos credidimus ammonendos . . . adquiescite iustitiae, qua mundus laetatur. Cur ad monomachiam recurratis, qui venalem iudicem non habetis?* See also *Variae* 3.23.3–4, where Theoderic’s *comes*, Colosseus, is instructed, *remove consuetudines abominanter inolitas: verbis ibi potius, non armis causa tractetur . . . quapropter consuetudo nostra feris mentibus inseratur, donec truculentus animus belle vivere consuescat*.

made the Danube Roman again,²⁹ contributing further to contemporary ideas of renewal and restoration. This was, in Ennodius's words, "a golden age," and all that was lacking was a male heir to the throne, a "purple-colored offshoot to increase its profits."³⁰

Roman Gaul

But Ennodius was wrong. Gaul was missing from this revived Roman Empire, and on the eve of Vouillé this former Roman province was changing in the minds of onlookers, becoming increasingly barbarous.³¹ There were, of course, still residents of Gaul who remained recognizably Roman to certain, well-connected Italians, and even some aristocrats who continued to be equally connected on both sides of the Alps.³² Individuals such as Julianus Pomerius and Firminus of Arles, for instance, could be seen as relics from an earlier era, Romans-by-default who passed on their heritage to up-and-comers like Caesarius, the future bishop of Arles.³³ Indeed, Arles, once described as a "little Gallic Rome,"³⁴ was still a cultural beacon, acknowledged by Ennodius as "the citadel of eloquence" and "gymnasium of learning,"³⁵ where *perfecti* proved

29 See *Variae* 11.1.10 (a panegyric letter composed in Cassiodorus's name that actually refers to Amalasuentha's later gains in the Balkans): *contra Orientis principis votum Romanum fecit esse Danuvium*.

30 *Pan.* 93: *sed utinam aurei bona saeculi purpuratum ex te germen amplificet!*

31 For Italo-Romans, see below. For eastern Romans, see the slightly later descriptions of Procop. *Wars* 5.12.4–19 and Agathias, *Histories* 1.2. Gaul, of course, was not a province, but a series of provinces.

32 For these individuals, see R. W. Mathisen, "'Qui Genus, unde Patres?' The Case of Arcadius Placidus Magnus Felix," *Medieval Prosopography* 24 (2004): 55–71.

33 For greater elaboration, see Arnold, "Restoration of the Roman Empire," 217–25. Most of Ennodius's Gallic correspondents were praised for their (Roman) eloquence, but his letters to Firminus (nos. 12, 40) and Pomerius (no. 39) are especially florid. For Pomerius, see *PLRE* 2.896; for Firminus, *PLRE* 2.471 (Firminus 4). For Caesarius, who was a student of Pomerius, see Ennodius, no. 461, with *Vita Caesarii* 1.9 and William Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Cambridge, 1994), 72–75.

34 Ausonius, *Ordo Urbium Nobilium* (*Opuscula* 19) 74: "Gallula Roma Arelas."

35 For citadel, Ennodius, no. 12.2: *in eloquentiae arce constitutus*; for *gymnasium*, no. 40.3: *nos ab scholarum gymnasiis sequestrati*. For the survival of classical culture at Arles, see Marie-José Delage, "Un évêque au temps des invasions," 21–43 at 24–29; and Paul-Albert Février, "Césaire et la Gaule méridionale au VI^e siècle," 45–73 at 46–49, both in *Césaire d'Arles et la Christianisation de la Provence* (Paris, 1994). More generally, Pierre Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West: Sixth through Eighth Centuries*, trans. John J. Contreni (Columbia SC, 1976), 31–36; and R. W. Mathisen, "Bishops, Barbarians, and the 'Dark Ages': The Fate of Late Roman Educational Institutions in

that “the splendor of perfectly refined speech glistens forth.”³⁶ But with Gaul no longer part of Italy’s Roman Empire, such *perfecti* were in danger.³⁷ At times, Gaul had seemed rather un-Roman anyway, and there was a longstanding tradition of envisioning its provincials lapsing into savagery without Roman rule.³⁸ Some in Italy could be sensitive, imagining that Gallo-Romans resisted or resented their present condition. Theoderic, for example, described a pre-Vouillé Gaul where noble Romans were miserably “alien in their own country” and “lying dead under a suspension of justice,”³⁹ while Ennodius, more dramatically, depicted Gallo-Roman provincials “weeping at their captivity.”⁴⁰ Others, however, were less sensitive. Born after 476 and lacking Gallic connections, Cassiodorus rightly claimed that his generation had never known a Roman Gaul beyond the one of books or memory.⁴¹ More telling still, many Gallic individuals simply failed to live up to sympathetic expectations. Neither weeping nor captive, they were willing servants of barbarian masters; they were not becoming, but had already become, *politically* “Burgundian,” “Frankish,” or “Visigothic.”⁴²

Late Antique Gaul,” in *Medieval Education*, ed. R. Begley and J. Koterski (New York, 2005), 3–19.

- 36 For splendor, Ennodius, no. 12.1: *lucunda sunt commercia litterarum docto auctore concepta: illa in quibus ad unguem politi sermonis splendor effulgorat, ubi oratio dives frenis peritiae continetur*. For *perfecti*, no. 12.3: *gravat conscientiam perfectorum amor indocti and solent tamen dignos venia iudicare perfecti*.
- 37 Nor were Gallo-Romans unaware of the possibility. For their “crisis of identity,” see J. Drinkwater and H. Elton, eds., *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* (Cambridge, 1992); see also Raymond Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley, 1985), chaps. 7–8; and R. W. Mathisen, *Roman Aristocrats in Barbarian Gaul: Strategies for Survival in an Age of Transition* (Austin, 1993).
- 38 The supposed lapse was especially the case with rebellion and usurpation in Gaul. See Ralf Urban, *Gallia rebellis: Erhebungen in Gallien im Spiegel antiker Zeugnisse*, Historia Einzelschriften 129 (Stuttgart, 1999). For the continuation of Gallic stereotypes, see Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, 2004), 413–26; J. F. Drinkwater, “Gallic Attitudes to the Roman Empire in the Fourth Century: Continuity or Change?” in *Labor Omnibus Unus*, Historia Einzelschriften 60 (Stuttgart, 1989), 136–53 at 136–37; and Arnold, “Restoration of the Roman Empire,” 209–13.
- 39 *Variae* 2.3.2: *Iacebat nobilis origo sub Gallicano iustitio et honoribus suis privata peregrinabatur in patria*.
- 40 *Vita Epifani* 92: *ut captivitatem flerent quos apud patriam remanere necessitas constringebat*.
- 41 *Cassiodori Oratorum Reliquiae*, ed. L. Traube, *Cassiodori Senatoris Variae*, MGH AA 12 (Berlin, 1894), 466.17–19: *Galliam quondam fuisse Romanam solis tantum legebamus annalibus*.
- 42 See *Vita Epifani* 85, for instance, where Ennodius praises the *eloquentiae meritum* of Leo, *moderator et arbiter* in the councils of the Visigothic king Euric; or *Vita Epifani* 168, where Laconius, a trusted official of the Burgundian king Gundobad, is described as *quem et praerogativa natalium et avorum curules per magistratae probitatis insignia sublimarunt*. For Leo, *PLRE* 2.662–63 (Leo 5). He was a correspondent of Sidonius,

Such political attachment was perhaps excusable from an Italian perspective, but becoming culturally barbarous, a related phenomenon, was not. The same Ennodius who praised the culture of men like Firminus, in fact, criticized its absence in others. His own young nephew, Parthenius, was a depressing case in point. His father of meaner, possibly even barbarian origins,⁴³ Parthenius's blood was viewed as tainted. It was "at variance in its very differences" and "submitting to the meaner side . . . according to the worthlessness of the age."⁴⁴ Worse still, in Gaul Parthenius had matured in a recognizably un-Roman fashion. He was "trapped in the darkness of rusticity"; his heart, like Gaul, was "wintry and cold"; he undertook "detestable and repulsive things"; and most alarmingly, he spoke with a "barbarous murmur."⁴⁵ Barbarian by blood or not, then, it seemed from Ennodius's perspective that Parthenius was becoming one, and only later instruction in Italy would help "dislodge the weeds and thorns of his heart," rendering him recognizable to his Roman kin.⁴⁶

Nor was Parthenius alone. For on the eve of Vouillé, other Gallic youths were similarly relocating to Italy, seeking a traditional education and finally earning, as Ennodius informed one father, "evidence of nobility through the study of the arts."⁴⁷ Still others were doing the opposite and actually

consilarius of Euric and Alaric II, and likely helped compile the *Lex Romana Visigothorum*. For Laconius, *PLRE* 2.653. Three letters in Ennodius's corpus (nos. 38, 86, 252) are addressed to him, all of which complain of his silence.

43 The exact parentage of Ennodius's nephew is a mystery and further complicated by the existence of another Parthenius in Gaul. Parthenius (2), the nephew of Ennodius, is traditionally distinguished from Parthenius (3), son of Agricola, son of Ruricius of Limoges. See *PLRE* 2.832–34. But see R. W. Mathisen, "Epistolography, Literary Circles, and Family Ties in Late Roman Gaul," *TAPA* 111 (1981): 95–109 at 101–3, who suggests that Parthenius (3) was not the son of Agricola, but his son-in-law, and thus one and the same person as Ennodius's nephew. The identification is certainly appealing, especially given that both *Parthenii* were in Italy around the same time. For a discussion of Parthenius's father as potentially a "barbarian," see S. A. H. Kennel, *Magnus Felix Ennodius: A Gentleman of the Church* (Ann Arbor, 2000), 139, who denies this possibility and also Mathisen's hypothesis.

44 No. 94.11: *quam timui, ne praefata permixtio dum ipsa diversitate discordat, in deterioris iura melior victa concederet et pro vilitate temporum facilius in ipso pars indocta regnaret!*

45 For rusticity, no. 94.5: *nocte rusticitatis includi*; for wintry/cold heart, no. 94.12: *hiemali pectore et corde algido*; for detestable, no. 369.4: *Deum precor, ut a te quod detestor excludat* and no. 368.1: *molitur obscena*; for barbarous murmur, no. 94.12: *gentile murmur de ore eius*.

46 Parthenius sought instruction at Deuterius's school in Milan, moving on to advanced studies in Rome in 503. For dislodging weeds, no. 94.9: *tu de eius pectore scientiae sarculo paliuros et lolium submovisti*; for recognition, no. 94.11: *ecce Partenum propinquitas sua ex utroque generis calle descendens alia agnoscit feliciter, alia feliciter non agnoscit*. For Parthenius's continued barbarism, despite his education, see Arnold, "Restoration of the Roman Empire," 235–38.

47 For evidence of nobility, no. 357.2: *adiungimus, filium vestrum in studiis liberalibus ingenuitatis testimonium iam tenere et talem se in hac cura praestare, ut avara suorum vota*

abandoning Italy for Gaul, and this too could have repercussions. Ennodius's own sister, Euprepia, for example, increasingly lost her Romanness when she relocated from Milan to Arles around 503. Failing to keep in contact with her Italian friends and family, she appeared "coldhearted" (like Parthenius), "dumber than an animal," and "more savage than a tiger."⁴⁸ In one letter Ennodius revealingly charged, "You have accepted the mentality of the peoples whom you have visited. You changed regions and renounced *pietas*. Your change in soil has altered your soul."⁴⁹

A citadel of eloquence and gymnasium of letters, post-Roman Arles could seem, at times, a dark and sinister place.

Barbarian Gaul

On the eve of Vouillé, therefore, Gaul was becoming an "other" in the minds of Italians, and the Alps, always an intimidating barrier,⁵⁰ were becoming an *ideological* barrier for the rejuvenated Roman Empire and its Romans. The words of Ennodius and others might appear to be highly (or even purely) rhetorical in tone, but the reality of the day was that the Alps had become the border, the new Rhine separating Theoderic's Roman Empire from the new *barbaricum*.⁵¹

transcendat. This letter refers to Marcellus, son of Ennodius's addressee, Stephanus. Marcellus, Parthenius, and an unnamed son of Camilla (no. 431) all received support from Ennodius when they sought instruction in Italy between 503 and 511. For Marcellus, *PLRE* 2.713 (Marcellus 5); Stephanus, *PLRE* 2.1031 (Stephanus 21); and Camilla, *PLRE* 2.255.

48 For coldhearted, no. 52.3: *sed in occasu solis, cui proxima fuisse narraris, frigidum pii amoris pectus habuisti*; for dumber and more savage (specifically in reference to her lack of concern for her son, who remained in Ennodius's care), no. 84.2–3: *cuius aestimabitur esse mens illa feritatis, quae erga curam subolis posterior ab inrationabilibus invenitur? . . . vere fateor sub libertate propositi . . . tigridem te inmanitate superasse*.

49 No. 52.4: *Suscepisti mentem provincialium, quos adisti. Mutasti regionem et propositum pietatis abdicasti. Nam abiurans Italiae communionem non solum circa amicos, sed etiam circa interna pignora reppulisti. Postremo animae tibi mutatio adcessit cum mutatione telluris. Pietas, of course, was an important, Roman virtue*.

50 For the terror and disdain that the Alps inspired in Ennodius, see nos. 10.4, 31, 245. See also Sidonius, *Epist.* 1.5.2 and Ammianus, *RG* 15.10.4.

51 For the strengthening of the Alpine frontier at this time, see Gian Pietro Brogiolo and Elisa Possenti, "L'età gota in Italia settentrionale, nella transizione tra tarda antichità e alto medioevo," in *Le invasioni barbariche nel meridione dell'impero: Visigoti, Vandali, Ostrogoti: atti del convegno svoltosi alla Casa delle culture di Cosenza dal 24 al 26 luglio 1998*, ed. Paolo Delogu (Soveria Mannelli, 2001), 257–85 at 260–66. More broadly, Neil Christie, "The Alps as a Frontier (A.D. 168–774)," *JRA* 4 (1991): 410–30.

Gaul was a potential military threat, and Italy's Alpine garrisons were instructed to remain "always ready for battle."⁵² Treaties might be signed, and some, like the Burgundian king Gundobad, could even be praised for their eloquence or prudence,⁵³ but the Franks, Burgundians, and Visigoths, Gaul's new masters, continued to be seen as traditional barbarian enemies. Their barbarian oaths, the oaths that now came from Gaul, were not to be trusted,⁵⁴ and when they were, disaster often resulted. It was a "cruel Burgundian," Ennodius recalled, who had ravaged and nearly destroyed Liguria in the 490s.⁵⁵ And, in fact, the Burgundians, whom Theoderic described as "beasts" with "barbarous ways," would continue to threaten Italy for decades.⁵⁶ The Franks and even Theoderic's Visigothic cousins were thought no better. Clovis's Franks had "beastly hearts" and provoked unjust wars.⁵⁷ Long after Vouillé they were described by Cassiodorus as a perennially "arrogant nation . . . always the first to leap into battle."⁵⁸ And though the "ferocious hearts" of Alaric II's Visigoths had been "softened by long peace," they were still found by Theoderic to be full of rage and lacking in moderation.⁵⁹ Moreover, the legacy of Alaric's father, Euric, who had put an end to Roman Gaul, lived on. Ennodius remembered him as a "cruel despot" with a "horrible desire for waging war" against Rome.⁶⁰ In true barbarian fashion he appeared "always armored" and "accompanied with

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- 52 *Variae* 2.5.2 (in reference to the soldiers guarding the defenses at Aosta): *in procinctu semper erit, qui barbaros prohibere contendit*. See also *Variae* 1.17, regarding defenses at Tortona.
- 53 For treaties, see below. For praise of Gundobad, *Vita Epifani* 164: *Tunc Rex probatissimus, ut erat fando locuples et ex eloquentiae dives opibus et facundus adsertor, verbis taliter verba reposuit*; also (and despite its general condescension) *Variae* 1.46.2: *dum prudentiam regis sui [Burgundia] respicit, iure facta sapientium concupiscit*.
- 54 *Variae* 2.5.2 (cited above) continues: *quia solus metus cohibet, quos fides promissa non retinet*.
- 55 *Vita Epifani* 139 (spoken by Theoderic regarding Gundobad): *Haec quamvis Burgundio inmitis exercuit, nos tamen, si non emendamus, admisimus. Populatae patriae cessamus succurrere, et aurum apud nos habetur in conditis?*
- 56 For beasts and barbarous ways, *Variae* 1.46.2–3: *propositum gentile* and *beluarum quippe ritus*, respectively. For later Burgundian attacks on Italy, see below and *Variae* 12.28, which records a Burgundian raid during the reign of Witigis (535/536).
- 57 For beastlike hearts, *Variae* 2.40.17: *gentilium fera corda*; for unjust wars, see *Variae* 3.3.2 (cited in n86).
- 58 *Variae* 11.1.12 (penned in Cassiodorus's name): *qui praecipiti saltu proelia semper gentibus intulerunt . . . superba natio*.
- 59 *Variae* 3.1.1–2 (to Alaric II): *Tamen quia populorum ferocium corda longa pace mollescunt . . . moderatio provida est, quae gentes servat: furor autem instantia plerumque praecipitat*.
- 60 For cruel despot, *Vita Epifani* 80: *Tolosae alumnos Getas, quos ferrea Euricus rex dominatione gubernabat*; for horrible desire, *Vita Epifani* 86 (Epiphanius to Euric): *dira bellandi praestat ambitio*.

weapons” and spoke just like Ennodius’s nephew with an “incomprehensible barbarian murmur.”⁶¹

Traditionally, barbarians like these were supposed to be slaves (or at least obedient defenders) of the empire. But on the eve of Vouillé it was remembered in an increasingly self-confident Italy that they had triumphed in Gaul, betraying the empire and then nearly destroying it. “Are you not *our* Burgundians?” an Italian envoy asked Gundobad after his followers had ravaged Liguria, and the response was unapologetically negative.⁶² Earlier, the same envoy had begged for peace with the Visigoths, suggesting to Euric, “Let it suffice” that the emperor “has chosen or, at any rate, allows himself to be called your friend, when he deserves to be called your master.”⁶³

Indeed, as Roman arms had failed over the course of the 5th century, negotiation had become the only viable option in dealing with the barbarians of Gaul. Self-preservation had become key, and soon after his arrival in Italy Theoderic had pursued it. Already in the 490s marriage alliances were formed;⁶⁴ thereafter Italian envoys continued to frequent Gallic courts, bearing news, prestige items, and additional prizes.⁶⁵ Ostensibly, at any rate, these gestures had

61 For armored and with weapons, *Vita Epifani* 90 (Euric himself claims): *licet pectus meum lorica vix deserat et adsidue manum orbis aeratus includat necnon et latus munit ferri praesidium*; for murmur, *Vita Epifani* 89 (where an interpreter is actually required): *Gentile nescio quod murmur infringens*. The description is obviously over the top, but the fact that Ennodius chose to depict Euric thus is revealing.

62 *Vita Epifani* 160: *nonne vos estis Burgundiones nostri?* The envoy, of course, was Epiphanius. For Gundobad’s unapologetic, word-for-word (*verbis taliter verba*) response, *Vita Epifani* 164–67. See also Avitus of Vienne, *Epist.* 93, ed. R. Peiper, *Alcimi Ecdicii Aviti Viennensis episcopi Opera quae supersunt*, MGH AA 6.2 (Berlin, 1883), 100. Here Gundobad’s son and successor, Sigismund, is made to declare to the Byzantine emperor, *famula vestra, prosapia mea. . . . Vester quidem est populus meus, et plus me servire vobis quam illi praeesse delectat*.

63 *Vita Epifani* 88 (Epiphanius addressing Euric): *Nostis in commune, quo sit dominiorum antiquitas limitata confinio, qua sustinuerint partes istae illarum rectores famulandi patientia. Sufficiat quod elegit aut certe patitur amicus dici, qui meruit dominus appellari*.

64 Theoderic himself married a sister of the Frankish king Clovis, while two of his daughters married into the Visigothic and Burgundian royal families. For these marriages, see Wolfram, *Goths*, 309–13; Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy*, 51–52; and Diaz and Valverde, “Goths Confronting Goths,” 357–58. These marriages would later allow Theoderic to invoke kinship (*affinitas*) as a rationale for keeping the peace in Gaul, though perhaps too much has been made of the barbarian elements at play here. See also Amory, *People and Identity*, 61–64.

65 For Theoderic’s diplomatic relations, see above, with Dietrich Claude, “Theoderich d. Gr. und die europäischen Mächte,” in *Theoderico il Grande e i Goti d’Italia: atti del XIII Congresso internazionale di studi sull’Alto Medioevo*, Milano 2–6 novembre 1992 (Spoleto, 1993), 21–43; Prostko-Prostyński, *Utræque res publicae*, 103–55; D. R. Shanzer, “Two Clocks and a Wedding: Theoderic’s Diplomatic Relations with the Burgundians,

been intended to normalize relations, acting as markers of friendship, good faith, and fraternity. But they were also pragmatic in nature, designed to minimize the threat of invasion and, above all, keep Italy safe. Though overburdened with expenses and inheriting a treasury “completely made of hay” at the outset of his reign,⁶⁶ it was nonetheless expedient, Theoderic explained, to “grant gifts incessantly to envoys for the sake of peace.”⁶⁷

This policy had served Theoderic and Italy well. For as Vouillé drew near, peaceful relations had been maintained with the rulers of Gaul for nearly a decade and had thus proven instrumental to the empire’s recovery and subsequent golden age. Moreover, this peace had posed little challenge to long-standing (and recently denied) expectations of Roman dominance, serving instead to reinforce them. Peace and friendship might be solicited, but they continued to be sought in the name of Rome and with a traditional air of superiority. In sending Gundobad a water clock, for example, Theoderic claimed that this technology was lacking in Burgundy and that Gundobad should have what he “once saw in a Roman city.”⁶⁸ “Telling time by one’s stomach,” he asserted, was “the custom of beasts.”⁶⁹ Similarly, a skilled musician so badly desired by Clovis was sent from Italy to “tame the savage hearts of [his] barbarians . . . like Orpheus,”⁷⁰ while a thoroughly Romanized bride (Theoderic’s niece), who was “reared in Italy, learned in letters, and refined in her behavior,” was supposed to make “fortunate Thuringia distinguished for its culture no less than its victories.”⁷¹

Romanobarbarica 14 (1996–97): 225–58; and Andrew Gillett, *Envoys and Political Communication in the Late Antique West*, 411–533 (Cambridge, 2003), 148–219.

- 66 *Anon. Val.* 60: *aerarium publicum ex toto faeneum invenisset*. See also Ennodius, *Pan.* 23–24.
- 67 *Vita Epifani* 188: *ad haec princeps: licet nos inmanium expensarum pondus inlicitet et pro ipsorum quiete legatis indesinenter munera largiamur*.
- 68 *Variae* 1.46.2: *Habetote in vestra patria, quod aliquando vidistis in civitate Romana*. Admittedly, *civitate Romana* might simply mean “Rome,” but the condescension implied in this letter makes the above translation preferable. Theoderic’s claim to Boethius in *Variae* 1.45.2, *quod nobis cottidianum, illis videatur esse miraculum*, also seems to justify this interpretation.” See also Amory, *People and Identity*, 62; and Shanzer, “Two Clocks,” 240.
- 69 *Variae* 1.46.3: *Beluarum quippe ritus est ex ventris esurie horas sentire et non habere certum, quod constat humanis usibus contributum*.
- 70 *Variae* 2.40.17: *citharoedum, quem a nobis diximus postulatum, sapientia vestra eligat praesenti tempore meliorem, facturus aliquid Orphei, cum dulci sono gentilium fera corda domuerit*.
- 71 *Variae* 4.1.2 (in reference to Theoderic’s niece, Amalaberga): *Habebit felix Thoringia quod nutrit Italia, litteris doctam, moribus eruditam, decoram non solum genere, quantum et feminea dignitate, ut non minus patria vestra istius splendeat moribus quam suis triumphis*. Admittedly, Thuringia was on the border of Gaul and thus not technically Gallic.

Theoderic and Vouillé

Ironical, insulting, perhaps just playful, overtures like these had nonetheless proven successful for years. But peace in Gaul was not to last, and as conditions deteriorated, those looking on in Italy worked feverishly to prevent something like Vouillé from ever happening.⁷² To Gundobad, for instance, Theoderic wrote pressing for arbitration and suggesting that Alaric and Clovis were “impetuous youths.” They were “unable to restrain the recklessness of their wills” but might respect the good advice of their elders.⁷³ To Clovis he likewise pleaded for peaceful arbitration and offered to provide impartial mediators if both parties agreed.⁷⁴ The conflict, he asserted, stemmed from “mediocre causes.”⁷⁵ Both he and Alaric were “flourishing” and “kings of the greatest peoples,” but one of them, he eerily foretold, would suffer in the ensuing conflict.⁷⁶ And to Alaric, finally, he wrote that his quarrel with Clovis was a matter of words, not murdered kin or seized territory.⁷⁷ Arbitration was the rational solution, and barbarian rage should yield before justice and moderation, war being a last resort.⁷⁸

Hindsight reveals the futility of these attempts, and those in Italy were well aware of the consequences of their failure. Italy was potentially in danger, and so

72 Indeed, *Variae* 3.1–4 constitutes a dossier of correspondence hastily composed and sent to Gaul as matters came to a head in 507. For a discussion, Salvatore Pricoco, “Cassiodore et le conflit franco-wisigothique, rhétorique et histoire,” in *Clovis: histoire et mémoire*, ed. Michel Rouche (Paris, 1997), 739–52.

73 *Variae* 3.2.2: *nostrum est regios iuvenes obiecta ratione moderari, quia illi, si nobis vere sentiunt displicere quod male cupiunt. Audaciam suae voluntatis retinere non possunt. Verentur senes, quamvis sint florida aetate ferventes.* Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy*, 177, describes the language of this particular dispatch as “a little fanciful.” Perhaps, then, Theoderic was attempting to woo the “learned” Gundobad (see above) with eloquence of his own.

74 *Variae* 3.4.3: *a parentibus quod quaeritur, electis iudicibus expetatur. Nam inter tales viros et illis gratum est dare, quos medios volueritis efficere.* For a discussion of the type of arbitration Theoderic appears to have had in mind, see Gillett, *Envoys*, 209–10. See also *Chronicle of Fredegar* 2.58, ed. Bruno Krusch, *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii Scholastici libri IV cum Continuationibus*, MGH SRM 2 (Hannover, 1888), 82–83, where Theoderic is described as mediating between both parties and intentionally bungling the job. See Shanzer’s essay in this volume.

75 *Variae* 3.4.2: *miramur animos vestros sic causis medicibus excitatos.*

76 *Variae* 3.4.2–3: *ambo estis summarum gentium reges, ambo aetate florentes. Non leviter regna vestra quassatis, si data partibus libertate confligitis. Virtus vestra patriae non fiat inopinata calamitas, quia grandis invidia est regum in causis levibus gravis ruina populorum. . . . Absit ille conflictus, ubi unus ex vobis dolere poterit inclinatus. Abicite ferrum.*

77 *Variae* 3.1.3: *non vos parentum fusus sanguis inflammat, non graviter urit occupata provincia: adhuc de verbis parva contentio est.*

78 *Variae* 3.1.2: *furor autem instantia plerumque praecipitat et tunc utile solum est ad arma concurrere, cum locum apud adversarium iustitia non potest invenire.*

contingency plans became necessary. Indeed, barbarian oaths might not be trustworthy, but some barbarians were more reliable than others. With relations already strained with Clovis over his recent annihilation of the Alamanni,⁷⁹ with Gundobad a former enemy poised to side with the Franks, and with certain “delighted” onlookers (the Byzantines) encouraging the slaughter,⁸⁰ the decision naturally fell with Alaric and his Visigoths. This was not a case of Gothic solidarity, however, nor could it have been given the thoroughly Roman identity of Theoderic and his realm.⁸¹ Instead, it was simply the most logical of choices. The Visigoths, after all, had already proven themselves valuable allies,⁸² and, much more importantly, they ruled a stable kingdom that provided a useful buffer blocking Frankish and Burgundian access to Italy.⁸³ It was the Visigoths, therefore, who seemed positioned to keep Italy the safest, and soon similar alliances were sought with the kings of the Heruls, Warni, and Thuringians, doubtless with an eye to defending Italy’s northern approaches.

Clovis, at the end of the day, became the “common evil.”⁸⁴ “Your opponent,” Alaric was assured, “will rightly find me his adversary,”⁸⁵ while

- 79 See *Variae* 2.41.1 (dated to 507): *sed quoniam semper in auctoribus perfidiae resecabilis videtur excessus nec primariorum plectibilis culpa omnium debet esse vindicta, motus vestros in fessas reliquias temperate, quia iure gratiae merentur evadere, quos ad parentum vestrorum defensionem respicitis confugisse. Estote illis remissi, qui nostris finibus celantur exterriti*. This letter congratulates Clovis for his glorious victories, but also commands him to leave alone the Alamanni seeking refuge in Theoderic’s kingdom. See also Ennodius, *Pan.* 72–73 (describing the peaceful settlement of Alamanni) and *Variae* 3.50 (ordering Noricans to trade cattle with them). They appear to have been settled within the vicinity of Raetia. For this, Joachim Szidat, “Le forme d’insediamento dei barbari in Italia nel V e VI secolo: sviluppi e conseguenze sociali e politiche,” in *Theoderico e i Goti*, 67–78 at 73; and Wolfram, *Goths*, 317–18.
- 80 *Variae* 3.4.2: *ut multi, qui vos metuunt, de vestra concertatione laetentur*. For the Byzantine identification, Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy*, 182. Given the Byzantine aid furnished in 507/508 (see below) and the honors granted to both Clovis and Sigismund in the aftermath of Vouillé, the identification seems probable.
- 81 For Gothic solidarity, see Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy*, 180. Wolfram, *Goths*, 309–10, is more suspicious of such motivation, while Diaz and Valverde, “Goths Confronting Goths,” 359–60, outright deny it.
- 82 According to *Anon. Val.* 53, certain Visigothic soldiers arrived at a key moment in 490, when Odoacar was advancing upon Theoderic at Milan: *Tunc venerunt Wisigothae in adiutorium Theoderici et facta est pugna super fluvium Adduam . . . et fugit Odoacar Ravennam*. See also Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy*, 23–24; and Wolfram, *Goths*, 281–82.
- 83 See Diaz and Valverde, “Goths Confronting Goths,” 359–60, for similar conclusions. For the usefulness of such “client kingdoms,” see Edward Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire from the First Century A.D. to the Third* (Baltimore, 1976), 24–32; and (generally) David Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King: The Character of Client Kingship* (London, 1984).
- 84 *Variae* 3.1.4: *Commune malum vestrum iudicamus inimicum*, with Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy*, 180; and Diaz and Valverde, “Goths Confronting Goths,” 359–60.

Theoderic's potential allies to the north were warned that a king with such contempt for the law would "weaken all our kingdoms."⁸⁶ It was an ominous prediction of events to come, for in spring 507 Clovis and his armies rapidly crossed the Loire, while allied Burgundians pressed south and a Byzantine fleet made ready to sail west. Soon, at the Battle of Vouillé, Clovis's Franks and Alaric's Visigoths engaged in a bloody, decisive contest, and by the battle's end, Alaric had been slain and much of Aquitania had fallen into Frankish hands. The military aid promised by Theoderic had failed to materialize, and Alaric's defeat had spelled the end of Gaul's Visigothic future and the birth of France—but not quite yet.

Italy's Defenders

Despite the suggestion in a few later sources that Theoderic intentionally disregarded his alliance with Alaric,⁸⁷ he should not be blamed for failing to materialize at Vouillé. Clovis's invasion had been sudden, so sudden, in fact, that it might have been logistically impossible for Theoderic to deploy his army in time.⁸⁸ A later, Visigothic source, moreover, actually suggests that Italians had no knowledge of the outbreak of hostilities and that their earliest notice was the announcement of Alaric's defeat.⁸⁹ Finally, and most importantly, Theoderic was preoccupied in Italy, with Burgundians attacking in the northwest and a Byzantine fleet devastating the southeast coast.⁹⁰ While Alaric literally fought for

85 *Variae* 3.1.4: *Nam ille me iure sustinebit adversum, qui vobis nititur esse contrarius.*

86 *Variae* 3.3.2: *qui sine lege vult agere, cunctorum disponit regna quassare.*

87 See *Chronicle of Fredegar* 2.58 (cited above). Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy*, 178, also cites Procop. *Wars* 5.12.34–37, which may contain a subtle critique of Theoderic. See also Procop. *Wars* 5.12.24–32, where Theoderic intentionally delays sending assistance to the Visigoths and Franks, who were fighting together against the Burgundians, and acquires territory in Gaul without a fight. The account is hopelessly confused, but for possible reconstructions, see Arnold, "Restoration of the Roman Empire," 245 (n193). Heather, *Goths*, 232, suggests that Theoderic's failure to show up may have been deliberate, since he soon attacked his Visigothic allies (those that followed Gesalec, anyway).

88 For the suddenness, see Moorhead, *Theoderic in Italy*, 178; also Bachrach's essay in this volume.

89 Isidore of Seville, *Hist. Goth.* 36 in T. Mommsen, ed., *Chronica Minora Saec. IV. V. VI. VII*, MGH AA 11.2 (Berlin, 1884), 282: *Theudericus autem Italiae rex dum interitum generi conperisset, confestim ab Italia proficiscitur, Francos proterit, partem regni, quam manus hostium occupaverat, recepit Gothorumque iuri restituit.* As this is a Visigothic source that dates to the 7th century, its reliability is obviously questionable.

90 For the Byzantine fleet, *Marc. Com.*, an. 508 in T. Mommsen, ed., *Chronica Minora Saec. IV. V. VI. VII*, MGH AA 11.2 (Berlin, 1884), 97: *Romanus comes domesticorum et Rusticus comes scholariorum cum centum armatis navibus totidemque dromonibus octo milia militum armatorum secum ferentibus ad devastanda Italiae litora processerunt*, with *Variae*

his life at Vouillé, then, Italy was being assaulted on two fronts. And though these attacks had been short-lived “acts of piracy,”⁹¹ designed to forestall Italian intervention in the greater contest unfolding in Gaul (a tactic that clearly worked), they left an indelible mark, serving as a rallying cry for the invasion to come.

In June 508, with the Burgundians and Byzantines gone, Theoderic assembled his army for an invasion of Gaul. But whether he was finally making good on his alliance with the Visigoths or avenging the death of Alaric II (if, in fact, such an act required vengeance) was not specified in his official call to arms. The safety of Italy had been threatened, and per usual in Theoderic’s Roman Empire, it was Italy’s safety that was paramount. “Italy’s defenders,”⁹² in Theoderic’s words, were being sent to Gaul “for the utility of all.”⁹³ They were to prove their Gothic *virtus*, the courage of their forefathers,⁹⁴ just as they had done recently in the Balkans. And as they poured across the Alps “like a flooding river,” they “rushed forth in unison for the security of all,”⁹⁵ defending Italy from the barbarians, not liberating Gaul.

Indeed, a policy consistent with Italy’s defense was quickly put into action. Under the generalship of Ibba, Italy’s army began securing all of Gaul east of the Rhone and south of the Durance.⁹⁶ Marseille fell in autumn 508, Arles soon after, having been relieved from a devastating Burgundian and Frankish siege.⁹⁷

1.16, 2.38 (which describe the devastation). The attack occurred either in late 507 or early 508. The Burgundian invasion is admittedly less certain, but, if not actual, was certainly feared. For this, see Andreas Schwarcz, “Die *Restitutio Galliarum* des Theoderich,” in *Teoderico il Grande*, 787–98 at 789–90; and Delaplace, “Guerre,” 82, who follows him. The reconstruction rests largely on the dating and context of *Variae* 1.9, 2.30, and Avitus of Vienne, *Epist.* 1.10. For alternative dating, see D. R. Shanzer and I. N. Wood, *Avitus of Vienne: Selected Letters and Prose*, TTH 38 (Liverpool, 2002), 350–51.

91 *Marc. Com.*, an. 508: *et ad Tarentum antiquissimam civitatem adgressi sunt, remensoque mari inhonestam victoriam, quam piratico ausu Romani ex Romanis rapuerunt, Anastasio Caesari reportarunt*. Note Marcellinus’s disapproval of this campaign as “a shameful victory, which Romans [i.e., Byzantines] snatched from Romans [i.e., Italians] with piratical daring.” *Variae* 1.16 makes it clear that hostilities had ended by September 508.

92 *Variae* 4.36.3: *Italiae defensoribus*.

93 *Variae* 1.24.1: *pro communi utilitate exercitum ad Gallias constituimus destinare*.

94 *Variae* 1.24.2–3: *quatenus et parentum vestrorum in vobis ostendatis inesse virtutem et nostram peragatis feliciter iussionem. Producite iuvenes vestros in Martiam disciplinam*.

95 *Variae* 4.36.2: *transiens noster exercitus more fluminis, dum irrigavit, . . . pro generali securitate frementi adunatione proruperit*.

96 For the emerging frontier along the Durance River, *Variae* 3.41, which orders grain to be sent from Marseille *ad castella supra Druentiam constituta* late in 508. For Ibba, see *PLRE* 2.585.

97 On the siege of Arles, see *Variae* 11.10.6–8, which eulogizes the noble Goth Tuluin (see n21). There seems little reason to place these events within the context of a second assault on Arles, as in the reconstructions of Sirago, “Ostrogoti,” 72; and Schwarcz,

Other cities in the region, like Avignon, followed suit. Now seemingly secured, this newly acquired territory was permanently annexed to the Roman Empire, reestablishing the buffer province lost to Euric in 476.⁹⁸ It was a bold move that served to further embitter the Visigoths, whose new king Gesalec had failed to earn Italian recognition. By the next year, these Visigoths and Italy's Goths were openly at war. Carcassonne and Narbonne soon fell to the latter, while Theoderic began supporting his young grandson, a legitimate son of Alaric, as the rightful king of the Visigoths. By 510 Italy's troops had marched south to Barcelona, where they laid siege to Gesalec and his army. Frankish troops were also defeated in Septimania and thwarted in their final attempt at Arles. With Gesalec's flight to Africa the following year, however, Theoderic became the nominal ruler of the remnants of Alaric's kingdom, acting as regent for the boy-king Amalaric. Gesalec would eventually return, meeting his end in 514, and portions of Burgundian Viennensis would be captured in the 520s, but Gaul's reconquest was more or less complete.⁹⁹

Blessedness Restored

Back in Italy, of course, the response to these achievements was naturally ecstatic. The prosperity of the Roman Empire seemed boundless, and senators accorded special honor to Theoderic for his instrumental role. One senator, the

"Restitutio," 793. Tuluin is credited with capturing Arles's pontoon bridge, which would seem a more likely event for the taking of the city, not its defense. For an Arlesian perspective on this siege, *Vita Caesarii* 1.28–32.

98 The actual date for the (re)establishment of the Gallic Prefecture is uncertain, however. *Variae* 3.17 (dated to 508) demonstrates that there was already a *vicarius praefectorum* in Gaul. Though true, none of the *Variae* letters dated to 508–11 are addressed to a Gallic prefect, and so it is generally thought that this vicar originally answered to the prefect of Italy. For this, James O'Donnell, "Liberius the Patrician," *Traditio* 37 (1981): 31–72 at 44–46; Christine Delaplace, "La Provence sous la domination ostrogothique (508–536)," *Annales du Midi* 115 (2003): 479–99 at 481–85; and *PLRE* 2.677–80 (Liberius 3). For an alternative explanation that places Liberius in Gaul earlier, see Arnold, "Restoration of the Roman Empire," 248 (n207). Michel Rouche, *L'Aquitaine des Wisigoths aux Arabes 418–781: Naissance d'une region* (Paris, 1979), 50, claims without justification that the vicar in question was *Vicarius Septem Provinciarum*.

99 For more detailed reconstructions of these campaigns, see Schwarcz, "Restitutio," 788–84; Delaplace, "Guerre," 83–87; and Diaz and Valverde, "Goths Confronting Goths," 360–61. See also, for Frankish and Burgundian perspectives, Eugen Ewig, "Die fränkischen Teilungen und Teilreiche (511–613)," *Akademie der Wissenschaft und der Literatur Mainz, Abhandlung der geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse* 9 (1953): 651–715 at 663–67; repr. in *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien* (Munich, 1976), 1.114–71 at 124–28; and Justin Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde (443–534)* (Lausanne, 1997), 400–406. For continued Italian expansion in Gaul, see *Variae* 8.10, 11.1, with Jordanes, *Get.* 296, 305.

illustrious exconsul Basilius Decius, expressed his elation in a series of private inscriptions erected along the Via Appia. Here, for everyone to see, Theoderic was hailed as, “our lord, the most glorious and famous king, conqueror and earner of triumphs, always Augustus, born for the good of the Republic, guardian of liberty, propagator of the Roman name, and subduer of the barbarians.”¹⁰⁰ Similar sentiments were echoed in the Senate House in an oration delivered by Cassiodorus shortly after the defeat of Gesalec.¹⁰¹ Addressing his *princeps* as an untiring earner of triumphs, Cassiodorus shouted bravo and asserted, “He bridles the barbarians with his *imperium*, he pacifies the provinces with justice; the tired limbs of the Republic are revived and blessedness is restored to our era. We used to read in the annals alone of a Gaul once Roman.”¹⁰² Gaul, Italians like Cassiodorus were saying in the aftermath of Vouillé, had been made Roman again, and this transformation served, once more, to legitimize Theoderic and his Goths in their rejuvenated Roman Empire. The golden age, therefore, continued and even increased in its profits.

Back in Gaul, on the other hand, Theoderic and others were espousing ideologies of liberation and Roman restoration as early as 508. Rome’s former provincials, who had lived for so long under barbarian rule and seemingly adapted to its deplorable conditions, were actually welcomed back to the Roman Empire, to their birthright, and to civilization itself. “Roman custom,” Theoderic informed them in one letter, “must happily be obeyed by you who have been restored to it after a long time. Recalled to your ancient liberty, cast off barbarism, abandon cruelty, and clothe yourselves in the morals of the toga. It is not right that you live like foreigners in our just times.”¹⁰³ Statements like these might have seemed presumptuous to *perfecti* like Firminus or Pomerius,

100 ILS 827 (CIL 10.6850–2): *dominus noster gloriosissimus adque inclytus rex Theodericus, victor ac triumphator, semper Augustus, bono rei publicae natus, custos libertatis et propagator Romani nominis, domitor gentium*. Later the inscriptions refer to Theoderic as *clementissimi principis* and add *ad perpetuandam tanti domini gloriam*. The inscriptions are firmly dated to after 507 based on *Variae* 2.32–3, see PLRE 2.349 (Caecina Mavortius Basilius Decius). See also Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge, 1986), 278–80.

101 The oration is fragmentary, but was perhaps given in celebration of Cassiodorus’s consulship in 514. An alternative reading places it in 519, in celebration of Eutharic’s consulship. See the introduction in the edition of Traube, 462 (n1 especially).

102 Cass. *Orat. Rel.*, 466.9–19: *provincias iustitiae serenitate tranquillat, frenat superbas gentes imperio . . . Macte, infatigabilis triumphator, quo pugnante fessa rei publicae membra reparantur et ad saecula nostra antiqua beatitudo revertitur. Galliam quondam fuisse Romanam solis tantum legebamur annalibus*.

103 *Variae* 3.17.1: *Libenter parendum est Romanae consuetudini, cui estis post longa tempora restituti. . . . Atque ideo in antiquam libertatem deo praestante revocati vestimini moribus togatis, exuite barbariem, abicite mentium crudelitatem, quia sub aequitate nostri temporis non vos decet vivere moribus alienis*.

but the Gauls were nonetheless being asked to become Romans again, and their Italian friends assured them that their “glorious *princeps*” would support and honor them.¹⁰⁴ Consistent with policies enacted earlier in Pannonia, Gaul’s seemingly lapsed provincials were also advised to embrace the rule of Roman law, a civilizing act that had rendered the Goths themselves admirably Roman in certain circles. “What could be more favorable,” they were asked, “than being confident in the laws alone, [since] barbarians live according to pleasure?”¹⁰⁵

This reestablishment of Roman rule in Gaul, therefore, was intended to return Gaul and its inhabitants to their imagined prior state, effectively re-Romanizing them. This was a moral obligation for the empire and a matter of honor for its would-be emperor, Theoderic.¹⁰⁶ Certain “exceptional men”¹⁰⁷ were hence chosen to oversee the process. Hailed for having “restored the glory of the rule of law” to Gaul, distinguished Goths were instructed to “see to whatever pertains to security,” “defend [the Gauls] by arms,” and compel “all to the justice by which our empire flourishes.”¹⁰⁸ Noble Romans like the vicar Gemellus and the praetorian prefect Liberius, whose Romanness spoke for

104 Ennodius, no. 270.2–3 (to Aurelianus, who had been stripped of his patrimony during the course of Gaul’s restoration): *tamen sub hoc titulo invictissimi domini multum locupletem gratiam comparavit. Bona est iactura substantiae, si incliti notitia principis dispendiis invenitur. . . . Summi domini amor acquiritur. . . . facta est lucri mater et honorum via.* Another letter (no. 412) makes clear that Aurelianus later availed himself to Theoderic’s assistance.

105 *Variae* 3.17.3–4: *quid enim potest esse felicius quam homines de solis legibus confidere et casus reliquos non timere? . . . gentilitas enim vivit ad libitum.* Roman law, of course, had remained in effect in Visigothic Gaul under Euric and Alaric II, and Theoderic even recognized Roman compilations as binding (see *Variae* 4.12, 4.17, 5.39). The issue here was hence a matter of practice and application rather than necessarily straightforward existence.

106 See *Variae* 3.38.1: *in regionibus Gallicanis, ubi . . . ipsa initia bene plantare debent nostri nominis famam*, and *Variae* 3.16.2: *quos nostris laudibus specialiter credimus adquisitos.*

107 *Variae* 3.16.3: *Desiderat viros egregios.* See also *Variae* 4.16.1: *prudentes . . . rectores.*

108 For the rule of law, *Variae* 4.16.1 (to the Senate in reference to Arigern): *his rebus ad nostra vota compositis et gloriam civilitatis retulit et quod inter vos didicit diligenter ostendens et bellorum insignia reportavit.* For Arigern, whose career was rather illustrious and often placed him in the midst of the Romans at Rome, see *PLRE* 2.141–42. For security and empire flourishing, *Variae* 3.34.2 (regarding Marabad): *ut quicquid ad securitatem vel civilitatem vestram pertinet . . . minoribus solacium ferat, insolentibus severitatem suae districtiois obiciat, nullum denique opprimi iniqua praesumptione patiatur, sed omnes cogat ad iustum, unde semper floret imperium.* For Marabad, see *PLRE* 2.706. For defending by arms, *Variae* 3.43.1 (to Unigis): *delectamur iure Romano vivere quos armis cupimus vindicare*; and *Variae* 4.12.1 (to Marabad): *Propositi nostri est, ut provincias nobis deo auxiliante subiectas, sicut armis defendimus.* For Unigis, see *PLRE* 2.1182. See also *Variae* 3.38, 4.17, which contain similar injunctions to Gothic administrators.

itself,¹⁰⁹ were similarly instructed to “correct” the Gauls and to show themselves “the kinds of judge[s] . . . a Roman *princeps* might send.”¹¹⁰ Their presence alone served to remind the Gauls of their very Roman restoration, while their integrity in office would ensure that such a restoration was welcomed. Good governance, it was hoped, would prove so beneficial to the Gauls that they would rejoice in being conquered.¹¹¹

Certain aid packages were also designed to sow these kinds of sentiments, while at the same time providing for Gaul’s postwar recovery. Gaul needed more than just “exceptional” governors to correct her; she needed money and resources. This was a land ravaged by war, described in various letters as a “tired province,” “devastated by enemy savagery,” and “suffering want on our behalf.”¹¹² Even in private letters to the prefect Liberius, Ennodius expressed the belief that this land, now “tasting of Roman freedom” and “restored to the rule of law,” should not be exploited for Italy’s gain, but cherished and fostered.¹¹³ Theoderic agreed, and a number of letters in the *Variae* demonstrate this well. In 508, for instance, provisions and money were sent directly from Italy so that the province would not be overburdened.¹¹⁴ In 510, following renewed Frankish aggression, taxes in Arles, Marseille, and later the entire province of Gaul were

109 On Liberius’s Romanness, see *Variae* 2.16, 11.1.16, and the letters directed to him by Ennodius, especially no. 447. While prefect in Gaul he likewise received a letter from Avitus of Vienne (*Epist.* 35), befriended both Caesarius of Arles (*Vita Caesarii* 2.11–13) and Apollinaris of Valence (*Vita Apollinaris* 10, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SRM 3.201), and built and dedicated a basilica at Orange (its dedication is recorded in the minutes for the Council of Orange). See also O’Donnell, “Liberius,” 31–72; and Delaplace, “Provence,” 497–99. For Gemellus, see *Variae* 3.16, 3.17. He is described as a *vir spectabilis* and identified as having already proven his integrity to Theoderic in prior offices.

110 *Variae* 3.16.2–3: *quando ad illos populos mitteris corrigendos . . . ut talem te iudicem provincia fessa suscipiat, qualem Romanum principem transmisisse cognoscat.*

111 *Variae* 3.16.3: *effice ut victam fuisse delectet. Nihil tale sentiat, quale patiebatur, cum Romam quaereret.* See also *Variae* 3.43.3: *nobis propositum est deo iuvante sic vincere, ut subiecti se doleant nostrum dominium tardius adquisisse.*

112 For tired province, *Variae* 3.16.3: *provincia fessa*, and 3.41.2: *fatigata provincia*; for devastated, *Variae* 3.40.2: *hostili feritate vastatis*; for suffering, *Variae* 3.32.1–2: *qui nostris partibus . . . penuriam pertulerunt . . . qui pro nobis in angustiis esurire maluerunt.* See also, for a Gallic perspective, Caesarius of Arles, *Serm.* 6.6, 70.2, ed. G. Morin, *Caesarii Arelatensis Opera*, CCSL 103 (Turnholt, 1953), with Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*, 113–14.

113 Ennodius, no. 447.6: *ut Christo deo vivo disponente ordinatis illis, quibus civilitatem post multos annorum circulos intulisti, quos ante te non contigit saporum de Romana libertate gustare*; and no. 457.4: *non neget in Gallia, ut vel de casellulis ipsius ordinatione vestra dum ab eis fisci onera derivantur, ad praefatae alimenta sufficiant.*

114 *Variae* 3.41.2. *Tritici itaque speciem, quam ob exercitiales expensas nostra providentia de Italia destinavit, ne fatigata provincia huius praebitione laederetur.*

canceled.¹¹⁵ This was “princely foresight,” Theoderic explained, and Gallic loyalty was payment enough.¹¹⁶ Similarly, sometime before 511, the sales tax on wheat, wine, and oil was canceled in the hope of encouraging luxury trade. “Who would not be aroused to sell more lavish things,” Theoderic asked, “to those whose usual expenses have been taken away?”¹¹⁷

Examples like these reveal the desire for war-torn Gaul, once economically prosperous, to flourish again and ultimately participate in the empire’s golden age. Such an economic recovery, of course, would eventually benefit Italy’s coffers,¹¹⁸ but its visible repercussions were no less important. Gaul could look Roman again, providing visual confirmation of its restored status. Roman nobility, as Theoderic put it, was a combination of good morals and splendid goods,¹¹⁹ and under barbarian rule, it was thought, the Gauls had not only adopted alien customs, but also hidden their wealth in fear. Now safe and free, however, they were encouraged to show off their riches. “Let the possessions of your parents, hidden in faraway places, be brought back into the light,”¹²⁰ they were told. Their cities, too, were supposed to reflect this newfound prosperity, and, just as in Italy, Theoderic took an active interest in subsidizing civic projects. The walls of Arles, for instance, were to be “returned to their ancient splendor” with the assistance of Italian money, since “it was right for this city’s prosperity to be demonstrated by the beauty of its constructions.”¹²¹ Other cities had ancient privileges, a mark of honor and often of financial benefit, restored and even new ones granted. Marseille regained certain immunities acquired

115 For these cancellations, see *Variae* 3.32, 3.40, 4.26, with Sirago, “Ostrogoti,” 69; Schwarcz, “Restitutio,” 796; and Delaplace, “Provence,” 486.

116 For princely foresight, *Variae* 4.19.1 (discussed below): *Decet principalem providentiam fessa refovere*; for payment enough, *Variae* 3.32.2: *pretiosum vectigal iam nobis dederunt fidei suae. Iniustum est ut viles pecunias exigantur qui gloriosas conscientias obtulerunt*.

117 *Variae* 4.19.2: *quis enim ad vendendum non incitetur largius, cui solita dispendia subtrahuntur?*

118 The idea was not lost on Theoderic. See also *Variae* 3.32.1: *tributa nostra relaxat humanitas, ita ut futuro tempore ad solitam redeant functionem*; and *Variae* 4.36.1–3 (regarding the cancellation of tribute for the Cottian Alps, which suffered devastation during the invasion of Gaul): *Providentissimi principis est graviter imminutis relinquere tributariam functionem. . . . Tributa enim non debent tristes exigi, per quos tributarios feliciter adquisivi*.

119 *Variae* 3.17.4: *quia tantum quis nobilior erit quantum et moribus probis et luculenta facultate reluxerit*. On the relationship between consumption and Romanness in Gaul, see Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge, 1998), 169–74.

120 *Variae* 3.17.4: *Vos iam securi ostentate divitias: parentum bona longo situ recondita prodantur in lucem*.

121 *Variae* 3.44.1–3: *et ad cultum reducere antiqua moenia festinemus. Sic enim fiet, ut fortuna urbis . . . fabricarum quoque decore monstretur. . . . Pro reparatione itaque murorum Arelatensium vel turrium vetustarum certam pecuniae direximus quantitatem*.

“through the favor of ancient [Roman] *principes*,” and likewise, Theoderic suggested, his own “princely munificence” now granted a temporary tax reduction in an act of “perfect *pietas*.”¹²²

A Happy Year

It would seem, then, that within just a few years of the Battle of Vouillé, portions of Alaric’s fallen kingdom were well on their way to becoming a part of Theoderic’s Roman Empire and were beginning to benefit from its so-called golden age. Like the inhabitants of Pannonia Secunda, Gallic provincials were being corrected and restored to their prior, civilized state. As in Italy, unforeseen beauty was beginning to emerge from devastated cities. Like all of the empire, Gaul now had Gothic soldiers, civilized heroes who defended them from real barbarians, and a Gothic king, Theoderic, a Roman *princeps* whose official dispatches constantly insinuated his imperial position. The glory of the Roman Empire, now including Gaul, seemed secure.

But a final, crowning achievement came in 511, when, for the first time in over fifty years, a Gallo-Roman was consul.¹²³ Felix, the son of a prudent and learned Gallic senator,¹²⁴ was granted this illustrious honor, giving his meaningful name to an equally meaningful year.¹²⁵ Emperor Anastasius, whose acknowledgement was sought by Theoderic (but not technically required),¹²⁶ was asked, “What could be thought more desirable than that

122 *Variae* 4.26.2: *immunitatem vobis, quam regionem vestram constat principum privilegio consecutam hac auctoritate largimur . . . census praeterea praesentis anni relaxat vobis munificentia principalis . . . ipsa est enim perfecta pietas.*

123 The most recent Gallic consul had been Magnus of Narbonne in 460. See *PLRE* 2.700–701 (Magnus 2). For the consul of 511, Arcadius Placidus Magnus Felix (simply referred to above as “Felix”), see Mathisen, “Qui Genus.” Mathisen’s reconstruction of Felix’s family suggests that it was extremely well connected in both Gaul and Italy and that this background made him a perfect compromise candidate in the wake of Gaul’s restoration: not too Gallic to completely offend Italians, but also Gallic enough to send a clear message to the Gallic aristocracy. Nevertheless, and as Mathisen, 59, concludes, “Theoderic [still] had a selling job to do.”

124 *Variae* 2.3.3: *nobilissimus pater, qui prudentiae facibus ita praeluxit in curia . . . litterarum quippe studiis dedicatus perpetuam disciplinis mancipavit aetatem.* For Felix’s father, see *PLRE* 2.1234 (Anonymus 104). For the hypothesis that this father was Magnus Felix (*PLRE* 2.463–64), see Mathisen, “Qui Genus,” 66–67.

125 *Felix*, of course, means something like “happy, lucky, blessed.” Nor was the meaning lost on Theoderic. See *Variae* 2.1.1: *Felix a consule sumat annus auspiciū portamque dierum tali nomine dicatum tempus introeat faveatque reliquae parti fortuna principii.*

126 The consulship of Felix appears to be a case in point. See *Variae* 2.1.4 (to Emperor Anastasius): *atque ideo vos, qui utriusque rei publicae bonis indiscreta potestis gratia delectari, iungite favorem, adunate sententiam: amborum iudicio dignus est eligi, qui tantis*

Rome . . . now numbers the Gallic senate in the company of her venerable name?”¹²⁷ This was the way the empire had once been and an obvious sign of *felicitas*. There were Gauls in the Senate again, and Rome’s senators were invited to rejoice. “Provinces unaccustomed to do so for a long time,” Theoderic announced to them, “now pay you with consular men . . . divine favor has lifted up the oppressed. Gloriously they have regained Rome and have plucked the ancient laurels of their ancestors from the honored grove of the Senate.”¹²⁸

Felix’s consulship, by way of conclusion, declared that Gaul and her inhabitants had been reclaimed by the Roman west and fully restored to their dwindling Roman heritage. There had always been the potential for this to happen before Vouillé. Felix, like other young Gauls, had Roman nobility in his blood and could exhibit recognizably Roman virtues before Italian onlookers.¹²⁹ But in a Gaul ruled by barbarians his family appeared hopelessly oppressed from an Italian perspective and deprived of its native honors.¹³⁰ By 511, however, he and nearly all the seemingly lost youths of re-Romanized Gaul could walk in their forefathers’ footsteps, over the Alps, and straight to Rome. Indeed, their ability to do so and participate in imperial politics was seen as a tradition of sorts symbolically restored by Felix’s consulship. “Frequently,” Theoderic reminded his Senate, “Rome has chosen officeholders from Gallic walls, lest she disregard their special qualities to her own ruin or their proven excellence cease to exist, having been dishonored.”¹³¹ It was a fitting statement, reminiscent of a speech made by Emperor Claudius nearly half a millennium earlier. Claudius

fascibus meretur augeri. This letter does not ask for permission, but simply suggests (albeit very politely) that Anastasius should recognize in the east (your republic) the consul chosen in west (Theoderic’s republic), an act that will restore harmony to the Roman Empire as a whole. See also *Variae* 1.1.4–5: *quia pati vos non credimus inter res utrasque publicas, quarum semper unum corpus sub antiquis principibus fuisse declaratur, aliquid discordiae permanere*. . . . *Romani regni unum velle, una semper opinio sit*. Indeed, Felix would be the first western consul recognized in the east since the Sirmian War of 504, and his recognition would do much to help normalize relations between eastern and western courts. See also Jones, “Constitutional,” 126–27.

127 *Variae* 2.1.2: *Quid enim vobis credi possit optatius quam ut alumnos proprios ad ubera sua Roma recolligat et in venerandi nominis coetu senatum numeret Gallicanum?* These words must have been read in Constantinople with some irony, since Rome’s reclamation of the Gauls had been a consequence of the emperor’s own hostilities and intrigues.

128 *Variae* 2.3.1–2: *gaudete, patres conscripti, redisse vobis stipendia dignitatum: gaudete provincias longa aetate desuetas viros vobis pendere consulares et de tali auspicio maiora promittite* . . . *tandem pressos divina levaverunt: Romam recepere cum gloria et avorum antiquas laurus ab honorata curiae silva legerunt*.

129 *Variae* 2.1.2: *qui longo stemmate ducto per trabeas lege temporum originarius est honorum*; *Variae* 2.3.5: *Vixit enim inter vos, ut scitis, non consuetudine peregrina, sed gravitate Romana*.

130 *Variae* 2.3.2 (cited in n39).

131 *Variae* 2.3.7: *Legit enim frequenter Roma fasces de moenibus Gallicanis, ne aut in damno suo praecipua contemneret aut probata virtus inhonora cessaret*.

had opened the door for Gallic service in the imperial administration,¹³² and now, as a consequence of Vouillé, Theoderic did so again. If only for a generation, Roman Gaul had been reborn.

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¹³² See the speech recorded in the so-called Lyon Tablet (*ILS* 212) and poorly reproduced in Tacitus, *Ann.* 11.24.

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The Role of Religion

Arians, Catholics, and Vouillé

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It would appear that the baptism of Clovis took place at Christmas 508.¹ Traditionally the event has been placed twelve years earlier, on the grounds that Gregory of Tours presents the king's conversion as occurring after a Frankish victory over the Alamans, which some manuscripts of his *Histories* place in the fifteenth year of the king's reign.² Gregory's account, however, is contradicted by every other reference to what appears to be the same battle, which would seem to have taken place in the year 506—though it has to be admitted that the Alamans almost certainly fought the Franks on more than one occasion;³ indeed, although Clovis is commonly thought to have defeated the Alamans at Zülpich/Tolbiac, which is known to have been the site of an engagement between the two barbarian peoples, this may well have been a different battle altogether; even Gregory does not claim that his hero was at Tolbiac.⁴ And while the only contemporary source to mention Clovis's baptism, the letter of Avitus of Vienne, is difficult to date, every indication would seem to suggest that it was written at the end of 508 or the beginning of 509.⁵

Of course, the letter does not necessarily help date the conversion of the king: conversion and baptism are two very different issues, and often, during Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, an individual was baptized some while, sometimes even some years, after his or her conversion: Emperor Constantine provides an excellent example. Thus, it is possible that Clovis was converted to Christianity in 506, in the course of his victory over the Alamans,⁶ and that he was baptized two and a half years later. In the meantime his wife,

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- 1 I. N. Wood, "Gregory of Tours and Clovis," *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 63 (1985): 249–72; D. R. Shanzer, "Dating the Baptism of Clovis: The Bishop of Vienne vs. the Bishop of Tours," *Early Medieval Europe* 7.1 (1998): 29–57.
 - 2 Gregory of Tours, *Decem Libri Historiarum* 2.30, ed. B. Krusch and W. Levison, MGH SRM 1.1 (Hannover, 1951).
 - 3 Despite A. Van der Vyver, "L'unique victoire contre les Alamans et la conversion de Clovis en 506," *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 17 (1938): 793–813.
 - 4 Greg. *DLH* 2.37 only mentions Sigibert the Lamé at the Battle of Tolbiac; the battle in 2.30 is nameless.
 - 5 Shanzer, "Dating the Baptism of Clovis"; D. R. Shanzer and I. Wood, *Avitus of Vienne: Selected Letters and Prose*, TTH 38 (Liverpool, 2002), 362–73.
 - 6 For the date, of the battle Van der Vyver, "L'unique victoire contre les Alamans."

Chrotechildis, and Bishop Remigius of Reims could have instructed him in the traditions of the Nicene (or “Catholic”) Christian church, as Gregory claims.⁷ It is, however, probable that during this time the king dabbled with Arian Christianity, for that appears to be the implication of one of Avitus’s remarks in his letter to Clovis;⁸ moreover, the king’s sister, Lenteildis, was Arian, and she only abjured her heresy following his acceptance of Nicene Christianity.⁹

If, however, it would seem that Clovis had not been baptized by 507 and indeed that he was probably toying with Arianism at the time, what is one to make of Gregory’s account of the events leading up to Vouillé? According to the bishop of Tours, Clovis decided to attack the Visigoths because they were Arian; he puts into the king’s mouth the phrase “I take it very badly that these Arians occupy part of Gaul” (*Valde molestum fero, quod hi Arriani partem teneant Galliam*).¹⁰ For this reason he assembled an army. As his warriors crossed the territory of Tours the king issued an order that no one should take anything other than fodder and water (*herbarum alimenta acquamque*). However, one warrior seized a peasant’s hay (*faenum*), arguing that it was no more than grass (*herbam*). The king personally killed the malefactor and made an offering to the Church of Saint Martin.¹¹ This story could have been invented by Gregory or by the church of Tours—in certain respects it echoes the anecdote of the vase at Soissons, when Clovis killed another insubordinate Frank who could be seen as defrauding the church.¹² There is, however, an apparently authentic letter addressed by Clovis to his bishops, in which the king explains that he issued an edict in the course of his march toward Poitiers, in which he had protected widows, priests, and all who the church wishes to defend.¹³ In other words, Clovis would seem to have presented himself as a protector of Catholics as he marched toward Vouillé in 507. The letter, however, does not prove that the king was already a baptized Catholic: it merely suggests that he wished to present himself as Catholic and, indeed, as a champion of the Catholic Church. One might see this edict, then, as a decisive rupture with the king’s involvement with Arianism. In other words, even if one accepts 508 as the date for the king’s baptism, one can set the edict of 507 alongside Gregory’s narrative and ask

7 Greg. *DLH* 2.30–31.

8 Avitus, *Epist.* 46, ed. R. Peiper, MGH AA 6.2 (Berlin, 1883); Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 363–64.

9 Avitus, *Hom.* 31; see also Greg. *DLH* 2.31; Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 364, 368.

10 Greg. *DLH* 2.37.

11 Greg. *DLH* 2.37.

12 Greg. *DLH* 2.27.

13 *Chlodowici regis ad episcopos epistola*, ed. A. Boretius, A. Boretius, MGH Leges 2.1 (Hannover, 1883), 1.1–2.

whether Clovis's campaigns in that and the following year were, in effect, a crusade.

But while the Frankish army could be presented as being Catholic (even if the majority of the warriors were still pagan), how should one understand the Burgundian army as it collaborated in the campaigns of 507–8? Most scholars, following Gregory of Tours, see the kingdom of the Burgundians under Gundobad as being Arian.¹⁴ Could an Arian army of Burgundians have been allies of the Frankish in a Catholic crusade against the Arian Visigoths?

We need to begin by asking whether Burgundians really were present at Vouillé. Although Gundobad had been a tributary of Clovis since 501, as Gregory himself tells us,¹⁵ the bishop of Tours only mentions Franks when talking of the forces opposing Alaric.¹⁶ Given that the Burgundians certainly were involved in campaigns within Visigothic territory in the months following Vouillé, we might guess that they joined forces with the Franks only following the Visigothic defeat¹⁷—the idea that they initially held back might be supported by a passage in Ennodius's panegyric on the Ostrogothic king Theodoric.¹⁸ In Isidore of Seville's *Gothic History*, by contrast, one finds that the Visigoths were faced with an army that included Burgundians.¹⁹ Which author should we believe? Gregory was closer to the events in question than Isidore, but at the same time it is clear that he schematized the conflict in order to present it as one between two kings, a Catholic and a heretic.

We know that the situation was a good deal more complex than this representation. Fortunately the letters of Cassiodorus reveal that a number of rulers other than Clovis and Alaric had involved themselves in the run-up to Vouillé and were interested in its outcome. Theodoric had sent ambassadors to Clovis, Alaric, Gundobad, and the kings of the Thuringians and Warni, to attempt to prevent the war.²⁰ Further, according to Procopius, Alaric was awaiting the arrival of an Ostrogothic army at Poitiers, at the time of the fateful battle.²¹ Although Theodoric might have been intervening in the war as an

14 E.g., J. Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde (443–534)* (Lausanne, 1997), 51–53; following Greg. *DLH* 2.28, 32–34.

15 Greg. *DLH* 2.32.

16 Greg. *DLH* 2.37.

17 For the military activity that followed Vouillé, see Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde*, 386–99.

18 Ennodius, *Panegyricus* 10.45, ed. C. Rohr, *Der Theoderich-Panegyricus des Ennodius*, MGH ST 12 (Hannover, 1995), 234–35. The passage is discussed in T. Kitchen, "Contemporary Perceptions of the Roman Empire in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries" (PhD diss., Cambridge University, 2008).

19 Isidore, *Historia Gothorum* 36, ed. T. Mommsen, *Chronica Minora*, MGH AA 11 (Berlin, 1893); Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde*, 395n147.

20 Cass. *Variae* 3.1–4, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 12 (Berlin, 1894).

21 Procop. *Bell.* 5.12, 33–40, ed. H. B. Dewing (Cambridge MA, 1919).

Arian, the fact that his chief propagandist was the Catholic Cassiodorus makes this problematic.

Isidore's account might be supported by the evidence of a number of letters of Avitus of Vienne. Two of them, written to Sigismund, by this time a Catholic, unlike his father Gundobad,²² have been dated to the Vouillé campaign.²³ Unfortunately the majority of Avitus's letters are not well dated, and the date ascribed to these two is not above question, though the argument that one of the letters was written at the time of the Vouillé campaign is compelling.²⁴ There is also a letter of Avitus, written to Bishop Victorius of Grenoble, which might allude to treasure taken from Arian churches during the campaign of 507,²⁵ though Avitus is perhaps best understood as criticizing the actions of Clovis's bishops at Orléans at this juncture.²⁶ And there is certainly nothing to suggest that this sheds any light on the presence or otherwise of Burgundians at Vouillé.

One might add an episode the *Vita Eptadii*, in which Sigismund liberates 3,000 prisoners who had been taken prisoner at *Idunum* by a Roman force operating in the name of the Burgundian king.²⁷ Unfortunately, the value of the *Vita Eptadii* is questionable. According to Bruno Krusch, the *Vita* is a forgery of the Carolingian period.²⁸ Justin Favrod, following Duchesne and Heinzelmann, has challenged the German editor's argument, and it is clear that some of Krusch's arguments will not stand up to scrutiny,²⁹ although, in my opinion, the value of the *Vita Eptadii* remains questionable. In any case, it does not help to solve the question of whether Sigismund and his troops actually were present at Vouillé. Perhaps more interesting and important, the author of the *Vita* describes the army of Sigismund as Roman. It may well be that the Gibichung forces, which had developed out of a federate army set up before the end of the western empire and which was probably composed of various military elements, contained a significant number of Romans. We might list among possible Romans fighting for the Burgundians at this juncture Aredius/Arigius, the

22 On the date of Sigismund's conversion, Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 220–24.

23 Avitus, *Epist.* 45, 92; see also *Epist.* 91. Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde*, 390, 395n148.

24 Avitus, *Epist.* 92.

25 Avitus, *Epist.* 7; Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde*, 399.

26 Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 301.

27 *Vita Eptadii* 12, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SRM 3 (Hannover, 1896); Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde*, 396.

28 B. Krusch, "Zur Eptadius Legende," *Neues Archiv* 25 (1900): 131–57.

29 L. Duchesne, "Saint Eptade," *Bulletin critique* (1897): 451–55; M. Heinzelmann, "Studia sanctorum: Éducation, milieux d'instruction et valeurs éducatives dans l'hagiographie en Gaule jusqu'à la fin de l'époque mérovingienne," in *Haut Moyen-Age: Culture, éducation et société*, ed. M. Sot (Paris, 1990), 105–38 at 113; Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde*, 17–18.

counsellor of Gundobad in Gregory's narrative, as well as being a correspondent of Avitus.³⁰ At the same time, it is possible that "Roman" in the context of the *Vita Eptadii* should also be understood as meaning "Catholic."

Ultimately, one cannot be sure whether Sigismund and a Burgundian army were present at Vouillé. Certainly, Gregory's account is not enough for us to state categorically that he was not. What is certain is that the Burgundians were allies of the Franks against the Visigoths in the months following Vouillé, for armies of Clovis and Gundobad joined to besiege Toulouse.³¹ Even more interesting is the presence of the Burgundian king Gundobad at the attack on Narbonne in 508.³² The Ostrogothic king Theodoric would launch a campaign of reprisals against both the Franks and the Burgundians for their aggression against the Visigoths, but it was the Burgundian kingdom that suffered most.³³

In trying to understand the alliance between the Franks and the Burgundians, it is necessary to remember that the religious situation in the Burgundian kingdom was extremely complicated under Gundobad. The king himself was Arian, as Gregory of Tours stated.³⁴ But one can also say that such a statement obscures the reality of the king's religious position and that Gregory also gives a false impression when he presents the kingdom as a whole as being essentially heretical. It is true that the bishop of Tours states that Gundobad wanted to convert to Catholicism, but that he was afraid of his followers, who were Arian. And certainly there are allusions in Avitus's works that suggest that the king did indeed support the Catholic Church, while at the same time not wishing to declare publicly for Catholicism.³⁵ In other words, the image given by the bishop of Tours, of a king too much under the thumb of his military following, could be true, but at the same time one should not insist on the Arianism of the kingdom.

Certainly there were plenty of Catholics among the Burgundians, even among the royal family. Indeed no female member of the family is known to have been Arian. One thinks immediately of Chrotechildis; but it is probable

30 Greg. *DLH* 2.32; Avitus, *Epist.* 50. Although the names Aredius and Arigius seem different, orthography in this period is such that they may refer to the same person; Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 326–27.

31 *Chronicle of 511* §§689–90, ed. T. Mommsen, *Chronica Minora* 1, MGH AA 9 (Berlin, 1892); Isidore, *Historia Gothorum*, 36–37. See also Procop. *Bell.* 5.12.41–44, where he seems to have confused Toulouse and Carcassonne.

32 Isidore, *Historia Gothorum* 37; *Chronicle of 511* §690 says that the town in question was Barcelona.

33 Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde*, 400–406.

34 Greg. *DLH* 2.34.

35 C. Perrat and A. Audin, "Alcimi Ecdicii Aviti Viennensis Episcopi Homilia Dicta in Dedicatione Superioris Basilica," in *Studi in Onore di A. Calderini e R. Paribeni* (Milan, 1957), 2.433–51. On the very complex theological position of Gundobad, see Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 163–207.

that her mother, whose name is unknown, and her father Chilperic, who may well be mentioned in a letter of Sidonius (*Ep.* 6.12.3), were Catholics. Gundobad's wife, Caretena, would seem to have been a Catholic: she may have been a Gallo-Roman, as her name does not seem to be Germanic.³⁶ And by 507 Sigismund, the son of Gundobad and Caretena, had already converted to Catholicism.³⁷ His conversion would seem to have taken place in the course of a visit to Rome in 501/502. The proof of this comes in a letter of Avitus to the pope.³⁸ Unfortunately the dating of the letter is open to question, but it is clear that the conversion of Sigismund took place before that of Clovis. Moreover, within this letter, which is in certain respects a piece of official correspondence, Avitus could say that the prince was the first king who was not ashamed to convert to the right religious affiliation, and this he could say in a kingdom that was ruled over by an Arian king. One finds the same situation in the famous letter addressed by Avitus to Clovis after the latter's baptism.³⁹ There the bishop praises the Frankish king for his decisions and his actions, including the liberation of a people who are surely to be identified with the Aquitanian Catholics, liberated from the yoke of the Arian Visigoths. King Gundobad must have been extremely tolerant: himself an Arian, he allowed pro-Catholic sentiments to be expressed even in official or semiofficial correspondence sent by high-ranking figures in his kingdom.

There is here an enigma: the king allowed the conversion of his son; he also permitted the bishop of Vienne to write letters praising both Sigismund and Clovis for their adoption of Catholicism; but at the same time—according to Gregory—he did not wish to alienate his Arian followers, and thus himself remained Arian. If this were the case, it is hard to see how Gundobad could have joined an anti-Arian crusade.

One should perhaps ask who these Arian followers were. As we have seen, not all Burgundians were Arian; indeed Gundobad and the young Sigismund apart, it is hard to find Burgundians who unquestionably belonged to the sect. Among nonroyal Burgundians, we certainly know of some Catholics: for instance Hymnemosus, who would leave the court to become a monk and finally abbot of Agaune.⁴⁰ It is worth remembering that there was a mid-5th-century tradition that the Burgundian people were actually converted to

36 G. Kampers, "Caretene—Königin und Asketin," *Francia* 27 (2000): 1–32; Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 19.

37 Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 220–24.

38 Avitus, *Epist.* 8; Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 220–24.

39 Avitus, *Epist.* 46; Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 362–63.

40 *Vita abbatum Acaunensium sine epitaphiis* 1–8, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SRM 7 (Hannover, 1920).

Catholicism.⁴¹ Given that all our clear references to Burgundian Arianism relate to Gundobad and to Sigismund while he was still young, we perhaps need to think not of the Burgundians as being predominantly Arian, but of Gundobad and his followers as the Arian core of the kingdom. It may be that we should see the king as having espoused Arianism, not because of his paternal family tradition, but because of his association in Italy with the Arian Ricimer.⁴² And we should perhaps ask whether his Arian followers were not actually the bodyguard he had inherited from Ricimer who was a relative, perhaps only by marriage, as well as his mentor and his predecessor.

But to return to the causes of the war between Alaric and Clovis: in a letter to his brother Apollinaris of Valence, Avitus speaks of the adulteration of gold coin by the Visigothic king and claims that the adulteration presaged disaster.⁴³ It is possible to think that the disaster was the defeat of Vouillé and that the cause of hostilities had involved some payment of tribute in substandard coin. This idea might find some echo in Fredegar's later account of the outbreak of the war, which involves an attempt by the Visigoths to cheat on a payment. While the tale told by Fredegar is clearly legendary, it may contain a kernel of truth.⁴⁴ Such an explanation of the origins of the war sorts better with the comments of Cassiodorus than does the religious explanation given by Gregory. According to the Italian, the causes of the war were insignificant, even if Clovis was justified in feeling aggrieved.⁴⁵ If we follow the implications of Avitus's letters, it would seem that the causes of the war were economic and that the representation of the war as a crusade was only a Frankish representation, even if it was already formulated at the time of the march to Vouillé and was intended as propaganda against the Catholic Gallo-Romans in Alaric's kingdom.

It is certainly possible that there was tension between Catholics and Arians in Alaric's kingdom. One can find evidence in numerous of the episodes in the *Life of Caesarius of Arles*, where he is accused of treason by his opponents.⁴⁶ One can also cite the persecutions of Volusianus and Verus, both bishops of

41 Orosius, *Historia adversum paganos*, 7.32, 13; 41, 8, ed. C. Zangemeister, CSEL 5 (Vienna, 1882); Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 7.30 §379; PG 67.805–7.

42 For Gundobad and Ricimer, I. N. Wood, "Gentes, Kings, and Kingdoms—the Emergence of States: The Kingdom of the Gibichungs," in *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. H.-W. Goetz, J. Jarnut, and W. Pohl (Leiden, 2003), 243–69 at 252–54.

43 Avitus, *Epist.* 87; Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 251–57.

44 Fredegar, 2.58, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SRM 2 (Hannover, 1888). See Shanzer's essay in this volume.

45 Cass. *Variae* 3.4.

46 E.g., *Vita Caesarii* 1.21, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SRM 3; W. Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Cambridge, 1994), 93–94.

Tours⁴⁷—and, of course, it may be significant that there is evidence for such tension in that particular city: it may suggest a very local context for Clovis's concessions to the Church of Saint Martin, and it may also help explain Gregory's take on events. There are plenty of other anecdotes relating to conflict between Arians and Catholics in the hagiographical works of Gregory. But one should note that these conflicts are not only those of Gallo-Roman Catholics against Arian Visigoths. In *Glory of the Martyrs*, Gregory recalls that a new church dedicated to Felix at Narbonne obscured the view from the royal palace: Alaric consulted his minister Leo, who ordered that the roof of the church should be lowered, and as a result miraculously lost his sight.⁴⁸ Here it was a Catholic Gallo-Roman who irritated the saint—and one might add that he may have had legal grounds for his actions.⁴⁹

But there are also indications of a rapprochement between Alaric and the Catholic Church, beginning at the very latest in 506, the year before the Battle of Vouillé.⁵⁰ Above all there is the evidence of the Council of Agde, held by order of the king and presided over by Caesarius of Arles, who had recently been rehabilitated and restored to his see after a period of exile.⁵¹ The council began with prayers for the king and kingdom and even for its expansion.⁵² Thus, Alaric's Catholic bishops, a mere year before the Battle of Vouillé, prayed for the expansion of his Arian kingdom. At the end of the council there was a decision to hold another ecclesiastical gathering a year later. The intention was to hold it at Toulouse and to ensure that the Spanish bishops were present. That it did not take place is probably a reflection of Clovis's invasion.⁵³

At about the same time that the bishops were meeting at Agde, another gathering was taking place at Aire-sur-l'Adour, where the Roman Law of the Visigoths, the *Breviarium Alarici*, was issued.⁵⁴ One can debate whether this compilation was a concession made by the king or whether it illustrates

47 Greg. *DLH* 10.31; R. W. Mathisen, *Ruricius of Limoges and Friends: A Collection of Letters from Visigothic Gaul* (Liverpool, 1999), 42–43.

48 Gregory, *Liber in Gloria Martyrum*, 91, ed. B. Krusch, MGH SRM 1.2 (Hannover, 1881).

49 Unfortunately *Codex Theodosianus* 4.24 *De aedificiis privatis et publicis* does not survive, but for an indication of the issues it might have addressed, see *Lex Romana Burgundionum* 17, 6, ed. L. R. de Salis, MGH Leges 2.1 (Hannover, 1892).

50 Mathisen, *Ruricius of Limoges and Friends*, 16–17, 42–43.

51 *Vita Caesarii* 1.24; Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*, 93–97.

52 Council of Agde, ed. C. Munier, *Concilia Galliae* A.314–A.506, CCSL 148 (Turnhout, 1963), 189–228.

53 Caesarius of Arles, *Epist. Dum nimium*; Mathisen, *Ruricius of Limoges and Friends*, 192–93.

54 See now M. Rouche and B. Dumézil, eds., *Le Bréviaire d'Alaric: Aux origines du Code civil* (Paris, 2008).

cooperation between the king and the Gallo-Romans.⁵⁵ In either case, it illustrates a moment of rapprochement.

One should also note the presence of Catholics in Alaric's army at Vouillé.⁵⁶ Even Gregory of Tours acknowledges that Apollinaris, son of Sidonius, was there.⁵⁷ More specific information can be found in the letters of Avitus. There are four letters from Avitus to Apollinaris, who would seem to have been his first cousin. Two of the letters reveal that Apollinaris had been suspected of treason by Alaric, but that the Auvergnat aristocrat had regained the confidence of the king before the Vouillé campaign.⁵⁸ During the period of uncertainty when Apollinaris was under suspicion, Avitus neither received a letter from his cousin nor wrote to him, because it was too dangerous. After Apollinaris's return to favor, Avitus sent him a letter of advice, as well as a copy of his verse epic based on the first books of the Bible.⁵⁹ There is also one further letter of Avitus to Apollinaris, written in the aftermath of Vouillé. The bishop of Vienne reveals that his cousin had served in the army (surely that of the Visigothic king) and that he had returned safe and sound to his family, much to the bishop's delight.⁶⁰ Assuming that the letter is correctly dated, Avitus's silence on the outcome of the battle might be taken to suggest that the Burgundians were not present, though the silences in the correspondence may reflect political caution as much as the reality of the situation. In this group of letters, there is no reference to religion: the emphasis is above all on the anxiety caused by the suspicion of treason and on Avitus's relief in knowing that his cousin and family were unharmed.

What should one conclude from all this information? First, it is clear that the Vouillé campaign boasted no simple division of Catholic versus heretic and that religion was not a major factor in the cause of the war. At the same time it appears that Clovis decided, as he marched toward Poitiers, that it would be useful to present himself as a champion of Catholicism, even though he had not yet been baptized. It was a dangerous game to play, because Clovis presumably hoped for an alliance with the Burgundians, whose king was not Catholic, even if he was personally inclined that way; moreover, Gundobad was inevitably concerned about the commitment of his army, of which a significant and influential element was apparently Arian.

If Clovis was hoping that his open support for the Catholic Church would win over the Aquitainian aristocracy, he seems to have been overly optimistic.

55 On the *Breviarium* see *ibid.*

56 Favrod, *Histoire politique du royaume burgonde*, 397n157, citing the *Vita Aviti eremitae* alongside Greg. *DLH* 2.37.

57 Greg. *DLH* *DLH* 2.37.

58 Avitus, *Epist.* 51–52.

59 Avitus, *Epist.* 51; *idem*, *De spiritalis historiae gestis*.

60 Avitus, *Epist.* 24; Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, 337–38.

Apollinaris, for instance, remained loyal to his Visigothic master, even though he had been suspected of disloyalty some months earlier. One can see all these contradictory elements as a problem; or one can say that major events of the early Middle Ages could be as complex as those of our own days. Even at the moment at which they were occurring, individuals interpreted or presented their actions as it suited them and in the light that they thought most favorable.

Perhaps more important are the implications of dating Clovis's conversion so late in the reign. What this would seem to suggest is that Clovis recreated the Frankish nation in the years from 506 to 511. This was not solely a matter of the Visigothic campaign and the baptism of the king: there was also the gift of the "consulship" by Emperor Anastasius. It is possible that Avitus saw this too as being in some way associated with Clovis's baptism, but there is a problem in determining the correct reading a phrase in the bishop's letter to the king, which might support such a theory.⁶¹ In addition, there is the issue of the meaning of Procopius's observation that the *Arborychi*, that is the Armoricans, came to an accord with the Frankish king, because both parties subscribed to the same religion.⁶² In Procopius's eyes, both Clovis and the Armoricans were Catholic at this point. And there is also the matter of the suppression of the other Frankish kingdoms, which would seem to have continued to exist until after Clovis's conversion.⁶³ And finally there was the council of largely Aquitanian bishops held under the Merovingian king's aegis at Orléans in 511.⁶⁴ In the space of five years Clovis had transformed the Frankish people into a Catholic nation. The process had begun at the very beginning of the campaign against Alaric, and it continued after the king's death. Clovis's apparent attempt to present the Visigothic war as a crusade as he marched toward Poitiers was only a preliminary element in this process. Gregory of Tours's narrative is in many respects its culmination. For the bishop the war was nothing other than the conflict between a Catholic and an Arian king. The reality was very different.

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62 Procop. *Bell.* 5.12.8–19; B. S. Bachrach, "Procopius and the Chronology of Clovis's Reign," *Viator* 1 (1970): 21–31 rightly drew attention to the importance of the passage, which had been much discussed in 19th- and early-20th-century scholarship.

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Vouillé, Orléans (511), and the Origins of the Frankish Conciliar Tradition

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From the perspective of a Nicene bishop living in the kingdom of Toulouse in the year 506, the future looked promising. In this year, King Alaric II had made some impressive strides toward demonstrating his worthiness as a successor to the Roman imperial government.¹ Most significantly, he had sponsored the compilation of the *Lex Romana Visigothorum*, or *Breviarium Alarici*, by Gallo-Roman jurists and permitted the convocation of a church council in the *civitas* of Agde for the month of September.² The twenty-four bishops and ten clerical representatives who attended Alaric's synod made no effort to conceal the Arian king's role in its convocation and boldly announced in their canonical acts that they had gathered together "with the permission of our most glorious and magnificent and pious lord king."³ This was possibly not the first time Alaric had shown an interest in the conciliar activities of his Nicene subjects, and it showed no signs of being the last.⁴ In the months leading up to his fatal confrontation with Clovis, the king of the Salian Franks, in 507, Alaric had begun planning an even grander synod, one that would convoke bishops from both Gaul and Spain. He put the project in the hands of Eudomius, a *vir magnificus* from his court, who in turn involved Bishop Caesarius of Arles, who had presided over the Council of Agde and whose efforts at forging ecclesiastical unity in Gaul complemented the political aspirations of the king.⁵

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- 1 R. W. Mathisen, "The 'Second Council of Arles,' and the Spirit of Compilation and Codification in Late Roman Gaul," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 5.4 (1997): 511–54, demonstrates that Alaric's efforts in 506 were a continuation of a long-standing policy of promoting good relations with the Gallo-Roman population and church. On this point, see also I. N. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751* (London, 1994), 46–47.
 - 2 See M. Rouche and B. Dumézil, eds., *Le Bréviare d'Alaric* (PUPS, 2008), 41–52.
 - 3 Agde (506), *praef.* All references to the *acta* of the Council of Agde are to Charles Munier, ed., *Concilia Galliae A.314–A.506*, CCL 148 (Turnhout, 1963), 189–228.
 - 4 Mathisen, "Second Council of Arles," 511–54, suggests that Alaric was involved in the convocation of the so-called Second Council of Arles ca. 500.
 - 5 Caesarius of Arles, *Epistulae* 3, ed. Germain Morin, *Sancti Caesarii Episcopi Arelatensis Opera Omnia* (Maredsous, 1942), 2.5–7.

Interestingly, the relations between the Visigothic king and the bishop of Arles had been strained prior to the Council of Agde by accusations of collusion with the Burgundians leveled against Caesarius by his own *notarius*, Licinianus. When Alaric learned of the accusations in 505, he ordered Caesarius to be exiled to Bordeaux. The exile proved short-lived, however, as Caesarius was recalled to Arles in 506, the year of the Council of Agde.⁶ The most likely explanation for Alaric's swift change of mind was the upcoming council itself, which would have needed Caesarius's enthusiastic cooperation to succeed.⁷ Regardless of Alaric's own suspicions of Caesarius's innocence or guilt, the king was aware that he required the metropolitan bishop's spiritual and pastoral authority to legitimize his conciliar projects, including the proposed synod of 507, scheduled to take place at the Visigothic capital of Toulouse. Larger political events would intervene, however, and the Council of Toulouse never took place; Caesarius's subsequent provincial councils would be held in relative isolation from contemporary Frankish meetings. Thus, with his victory over Alaric at Vouillé in 507, Clovis seemingly had wiped away a promising start to a new era in Gallic conciliar life.

Four years later, the victorious Clovis convoked his own church council in Frankish Gaul. His initiative, quite rightly, has been seen as an act of *imitatio imperii*.⁸ *Novus Constantinus* was not merely a posthumous epithet applied to Clovis by Gregory of Tours.⁹ The Frankish king and his successors made a conscious effort to assume the mantle of the Christian Roman emperors, not only in their political and military initiatives, but in their ecclesiastical and conciliar ones as well.¹⁰ But Clovis had a more immediate precedent than the Christian Roman emperors for his convocation of the Council of Orléans of

6 Cyprian of Toulon et al., *Vita Caesarii Episcopi Arelatensis* 1.21–26, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 3 (Hanover, 1896), 465–66.

7 Note William Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Cambridge, 1994), 96: "As bishop of the most influential see in southern Gaul, [Caesarius's] support for Alaric's plans was crucial to their success."

8 William M. Daly, "Clovis: How Barbaric, How Pagan?" *Speculum* 69.3 (1994): 619–64 at 657; Elisabeth Magnou-Nortier, "Existe-t-il une géographie gauloise des courants de pensée dans le clergé de Gaule au VI^e siècle?" in *Grégoire de Tours et l'espace gaulois*, ed. Nancy Gauthier and Henry Galinié (Tours, 1997), 139–57 at 148–49.

9 Gregory of Tours, *Decem Libri Historiarum* 2.31, ed. Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, 2nd ed., MGH SRM 1.1 (Hanover, 1951), 77.

10 The Frankish kings' desire to imitate their imperial predecessors in their ecclesiastical and conciliar activities is well established. See, e.g., Paul Hinschius, *Das Kirchenrecht der katholiken und protestanten in Deutschland* (Graz, 1959), 3.539–40; Charles de Clercq, *La législation religieuse franque de Clovis à Charlemagne (507–814)* (Louvain, 1936), 99; Jean Gaudemet, *Les sources du droit de l'Eglise en Occident* (Paris, 1985), 108; Jean Durliat, *Les finances publiques de Dioclétien aux Carolingiens (284–889)* (Sigmaringen, 1990), 141.

511, and we can just as rightly consider his act a form of *imitatio Alaricii*. It had been Alaric, an Arian barbarian, who had demonstrated that a *rex* possessed sufficient *auctoritas* to oversee the conciliar life of his *regnum*. Although Alaric's Arianism prevented him from participating directly in the deliberations of his bishops, Clovis, as a Nicene, had no such obstacle.¹¹ Prior to the Council of Orléans, he sent *tituli* to the invited bishops to establish—at least in part—the council's agenda.¹²

Clovis's direct participation in his council's business is reason enough to suspect that his motivations for convoking the synod extended beyond the mere symbolic act of *imitatio*. In fact, the First Council of Orléans, which inaugurated a new Frankish conciliar tradition, owed both its form and agenda to events far removed from the seclusion of the basilica. Clovis's victory over Alaric at Vouillé necessitated, for example, the consolidation of Frankish rule over southern Gaul. This task included the integration of Arian clergy and basilicas into the Nicene Gallic church. At Orléans, the Nicene bishops declared that *heretici clerici* who renounced their former beliefs could continue to hold ecclesiastical office with the permission and blessing of orthodox bishops. Additionally, the Arian places of worship located in lands now under Frankish rule would continue to be used following their reconsecration.¹³ The bishops who would oversee this integration project would themselves be natives of Aquitaine, who likewise were new to Frankish rule.

Indeed, the primary goal of the Council of Orléans seems to have been the acclimatization of the Gallo-Roman episcopate of the expanded Frankish *regnum* to this new political regime. Clovis's challenge was to amalgamate the bishops of his recently conquered territories in northern Gaul, many of whom were fresh appointees, with those of the south, who, under Alaric, already had begun the process of adapting their ecclesiastical organization to a postimperial

11 Alaric, however, did not necessarily play a passive role in the conciliar proceedings of the Nicene synods. In fact, one of the participants at Agde was a certain Petrus, described in the *acta* of Agde as *episcopus de Palatio*, suggesting he might have been an Arian, although other identities also have been proposed, including bishop of Poitiers or Boiatium, for which see respectively Knut Schäferdiek, *Die Kirche in den Reichen der Westgoten und Suewen bis zur Errichtung der westgotischen katholischen Staatskirche* (Berlin, 1967), 244–45n7; and Charles Munier, “L'énigmatique évêque, ‘Petrus de Palatio’ du Concile d'Agde de 506,” *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* 69 (1968): 51–56.

12 Orléans (511), *praef.* All references to the *acta* of the Council of Orléans are to Charles de Clercq, ed., *Concilia Galliae A.511–A.695*, CCSL 148 (Turnhout, 1963), 4–19.

13 Orléans, chap. 10: *De hereticis clericis, qui ad fidem catholicam plena fide ac voluntate venerint, vel de basilicis, quas in perversitate sua Gothi hactenus habuerunt, id censuimus observari, ut si clerici fideliter convertuntur et fidem catholicam integre confitentur vel ita dignam vitam morum et actuum probitate custodiunt, officium, quo eos episcopus dignos esse censuerit, cum impositae manus benedictione suscipiant; et ecclesias simili, quo nostrae innovari solent, placuit ordine consecrari.*

reality. The Council of Orléans demonstrated to these prelates new to Frankish rule that Clovis intended to take an active role in the religious life of his *regnum* and encouraged their assimilation into a new “Frankish” church.

The notion that Clovis’s recent wars influenced events at Orléans is not a new one.¹⁴ However, it has not gone unchallenged. In the early 1960 s, Wallace-Hadrill took a cautious approach to the question, noting that although the council’s attendance and some of its legislation reflected the Frankish victory over Alaric, Clovis had waited a number of years after Vouillé to convoke the synod.¹⁵ More recently, Daly systematically attacked the idea that the purpose of the Council of Orléans was to “settle territorial or political problems left over from the conquest of the Visigothic kingdom.”¹⁶ Daly made three explicit charges: first, that the episcopal attendance of the council did not support the idea of an Aquitanian focus; second, that the council’s location was chosen not for its position along the border of the Frankish kingdom and the Visigothic annexed territories, but rather for its centralized location in Clovis’s *regnum*, its substantial population, and its “more established traditions of diocesan life”; and, third, that the council’s legislation did not reflect an attempt to address issues raised by Clovis’s recent victories.¹⁷ The heterodoxy of Daly’s position calls for a response, and this study will answer each of his three points in order to demonstrate that the First Council of Orléans did play a crucial part in Clovis’s efforts to establish his authority over the dioceses of recently conquered territories and to bring ecclesiastical unity to his expanded kingdom.

The thirty-two bishops whom Clovis summoned to Orléans had their sees in seven Gallic provinces: Novempopulana, Aquitania Prima, Aquitania Secunda, Lugdunensis Secunda, Lugdunensis Tertia, Lugdunensis Senonia, and Belgica Secunda. The *civitates* represented thus lay in both the older and the more recently conquered parts of Clovis’s *regnum*. It is instructive to compare this attendance distribution to that of the Council of Agde, which drew bishops from the two Aquitanian provinces, Novempopulana, and Narbonensis Prima and Secunda. If one lays a map of the attendance distribution of the Council of Orléans atop one depicting that of Agde, a clear picture emerges. The Franks’ military victories allowed them to seize control of a wide swath of southern Gaul, yet a number of the bishoprics represented at Alaric’s council, including those in Narbonensis Prima and Secunda, southern Novempopulana, and southern Aquitania Prima, were not represented at the Council of Orléans. In

14 For the traditional view, see, e.g., Godefroid Kurth, *Clovis* (Paris, 1901), 2.136; De Clercq, *La Législation religieuse franque*, 8; Odette Pontal, *Histoire des conciles mérovingiens* (Paris, 1989), 47–57; Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 48.

15 J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long-Haired Kings* (London, 1962), 177.

16 Daly, “Clovis: How Barbaric, How Pagan?” 657–58.

17 *Ibid.*, 658.

Novempopulana, for example, Clovis established his authority at the metropolitan *civitas* of Eauze as well as the cities of Bazas and Auch. The remaining cities of the province, Dax, Lectoure, Saint Bertrand-de-Comminges, Couserans, Lescar, Aire, Bigorre, and Oloron—all of which were represented at Agde—seem to have been outside his direct control in 511.¹⁸ Similarly, to the east in Aquitania Prima, Toulouse and Albi, which were captured by Clovis and his son Theuderic respectively after Vouillé, were represented neither at Orléans nor at any Frankish council until the mid- to later 6th century.¹⁹ We probably can credit Ostrogothic military operations in Gaul, which lasted through 511, as well as a continued Visigothic presence in Septimania, for disrupting the integration of these southern *civitates* into the Frankish *regnum*.²⁰ Similar difficulties may also explain the absence of the bishop of Gévaudan (Javols) from the council. Harder to explain is the absence of the bishop of Limoges. The most plausible explanation that has been proposed for his absence is that the occupant of the seat in 511 was the elderly Bishop Ruricius, whose poor health prevented his attendance.²¹ In Aquitania Secunda, however, which Clovis seems to have completely absorbed into his realm, the situation was different. Both bishops who had been present at the Council of Agde were also present at Orléans, i.e., Cyprian of Bordeaux and Cronopius of Périgueux, as were all those—save the bishop of Agen—who had not attended the prior synod.²²

One can draw, in fact, a fairly straight latitudinal line from the westernmost point of the border between Novempopulana and Aquitania Secunda (save a short dip at the *civitates* of Eauze and Auch), through southern Aquitania Prima, and along the northern border of Septimania, which marks the southernmost extent of episcopal representation at the Council of Orléans. This

18 Michel Rouche, *L'Aquitaine des Wisigoths aux Arabes* (Paris, 1979), 50, observes that following the Ostrogothic invasion of Gaul: "We do not know whether or not all of Novempopulana was occupied by the Franks."

19 Albi was first represented (by an archdeacon) at the Council of Orléans (549). Toulouse was represented at the Council of Mâcon (585).

20 On Clovis's incomplete conquest of Aquitania, see Eugen Ewig, "Die fränkischen Teilungen und Teilreiche (511–613)," in *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien*, ed. Hartmut Atsma (Munich, 1976–79), 1.123–24; Rouche, *L'Aquitaine*, 49–52; Pontal, *Histoire des conciles mérovingiens*, 51. For the order of events in the Gothic war, see B. S. Bachrach, *Merovingian Military Organization* (Minneapolis, 1972), 3–17. Rouche notes that even following 511, Aquitania was not firmly in Frankish hands (51–58).

21 R. W. Mathisen, *Ruricius of Limoges and Friends: A Collection of Letters from Visigothic Gaul* (Liverpool, 1999), 44. Mathisen believes it unlikely that Ruricius was boycotting the council. As for Velay (Le Puy), there is no known bishop in the first half of the 6th century.

22 I.e., bishops Lupicinus of Angoulême, Petrus of Saintes, and Adelfius of Poitiers. The bishop of Agen did not attend either the Council of Agde or the First Council of Orléans.

line also seems to mark the southernmost extent of Frankish military control of southern Gaul in the year 511. Meanwhile, in northern Gaul, Clovis's more recent territorial acquisitions in Lugdunensis Secunda, Tertia, and Senonia were heavily represented at the council, with the majority of bishops from each of the provinces in attendance (a total of sixteen prelates).²³ Clovis had probably acquired most these cities during, or in connection with, his campaign in Armorica shortly after his invasion of Burgundy in 500.²⁴ In contrast, the *civitates* that lay northeast of Paris—that is, in territories Clovis had controlled since at least the 490s (and in some cases earlier)—had a far less substantial presence at the council, with fewer than half of the cities of Belgica Secunda, for example, participating.²⁵ Among the absent, surprisingly, was the metropolitan bishop of the province, Remigius of Reims. No prelates from Belgica Prima or the German provinces attended, and in Belgica Prima, at least, this lack of representation does not seem due to vacant episcopal seats.²⁶ Thus, the

23 I.e., the bishops of Avranches, Coutances, Evreux, Séez, Rouen, Auxerre, Chartres, Orléans, Paris, Troyes, Angers, Le Mans, Nantes, Rennes, Tours, and Vannes. Jean Heuclin, "Le Concile d'Orléans de 511, un premier concordat," in *Clovis: Histoire et mémoire*, ed. Michel Rouché (Paris, 1997), 1.438, has suggested that "Saxon pressure" may be partly responsible for the absence of some Neustrian bishops at the Council of Orléans.

24 For the dating, see Bachrach, *Merovingian Military Organization*, 10.

25 The participating *civitates* were Amiens, Senlis, Soissons, and Vermand/Noyon. Later hagiographical sources credit Remigius with appointing bishops to the seats of Arras (Vedastus) and Laon (Gennobaudis). See respectively, *Vita Vedastis Episcopi Atrebatensis* 5, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 3.409 (7th century); and Hincmar of Reims, *Vita Remigii Episcopi Remensis* 16, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 3.300–306 (9th century). Although sometimes credited too with the consecration of Eleutherius of Tournai, this was a postmedieval attribution; see *Vita Sancti Eleutherii Prima*, AASS Feb. 3, 187, note n.

26 Nancy Gauthier, *L'évangélisation des pays de la Moselle: La province romaine de Première Belgique entre Antiquité et Moyen-Âge (IIIe–VIIIe siècles)* (Paris, 1980), 156. The suggestion of Heuclin, "Le Concile d'Orléans de 511," 439, that hermetic civil disobedience kept the Belgian bishops away from the council is unconvincing. See also Kurth, *Clovis*, 2.139–41, who argues that it was the breakdown of diocesan hierarchy in Germania Prima and Secunda and Belgica Prima that caused their total lack of representation. Kurth's argument applies better to Germania, where there is limited evidence for diocesan stability ca. 500, than to Belgica. The episcopal lists of Belgica Prima, in fact, do not suggest significant breaks in succession; see Louis Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule* (Paris, 1907–15), 3.32–33, 37–38 (Trier); 3.46–47, 54–55 (Metz); 3.61–63 (Toul); 3.68–70 (Verdun). Heuclin argues that Bishop Vito of Verdun was ordained after the time of Clovis following a break in episcopal succession. But a reference in Bertarius, *Gesta Episcoporum Virdunensium* 4, ed. D. G. Waitz, MGH SS 4 (Hanover, 1841), 41, to Vito as the *nepos* of the presbyter Euspicius, who did live in the time of Clovis, and who refused the episcopal seat, is not strong evidence for this conclusion since (a) the meaning of *nepos* is not immediately clear from the context, (b) there is no mention of a delay before Vito's ordination, and (c), Bertarius was drawing

geographic distribution of the attendees of the Council of Orléans would seem to indicate that Clovis particularly sought the representation of bishops and cities newly integrated into the Frankish *regnum*. In contrast, he appears to have made a less concerted effort to include bishops like Remigius, with whom he had a well-established relationship.

This conclusion is supported by the episcopal subscriptions attached to the council's *acta*. These are listed according to seniority (but with the metropolitan bishops signing first). Their order indicates that the northern bishops in attendance were more likely to be recent appointees than their southern counterparts.²⁷ Thus, following the subscriptions of the bishops of Bordeaux, Bourges, Tours, and Rouen, eight out of the ten subsequent names belong to bishops from either Aquitania or Novempopulana.²⁸ Of the final ten subscriptions attached to the conciliar *acta*, all belong to bishops from northern Gaul.²⁹ The northern prelates' comparatively brief tenures in office have encouraged some to argue that Clovis personally appointed a number of them to their sees,³⁰ but although Clovis's Merovingian descendents certainly did interfere in episcopal elections, it is impossible to say for certain how many, if any, of these northern bishops owed their offices to the king's good graces.³¹ Regardless, what is important is that a substantial number of the northern bishops who attended the council were either recent appointees, newcomers to Frankish rule, or both. Among the bishops of Belgica Secunda, for example, which had long been under Clovis's control, the four bishops in attendance all appear to have been relatively recent appointees.³² If Clovis's primary concern was to consolidate his political and ecclesiastical control over newly absorbed sees or sees with newly appointed bishops, this explains why so many of the other prelates resident in Belgica Prima and Secunda, provinces that Clovis had controlled for decades, were absent from the council.³³ While one cannot

from an unreliable tradition associated with the monastery of Micy, on which see Gauthier, *L'évangélisation des pays de la Moselle*, 150–51.

27 On the ordering of conciliar subscriptions by seniority, see R. W. Mathisen, "Episcopal Hierarchy and Tenure in Office in Late Roman Gaul: A Method for Establishing Dates of Ordination," *Francia* 17.1 (1990): 125–40.

28 I.e., the bishops of Clermont, Rodez, Saintes, Cahors, Périgueux, Auch, Eauze, and Bazas. The bishops of Troyes and Paris (from Lugdunensis Senonia) also number among the first ten post-metropolitan subscriptions.

29 I.e., the bishops of Sées, Soissons, Avranches, Amiens, Noyon, Senlis, Coutances, Évreux, Auxerre, and Chartres.

30 Heuclin, "Le Concile d'Orléans de 511," 439–40; Pontal, *Histoire des conciles mérovingiens*, 56.

31 On Merovingian interference in episcopal elections, see Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 77–79.

32 I.e., Edibius of Amiens, Libanius of Senlis, Lupus of Soissons, and Suffronius of Noyon.

33 On Clovis's control of most of Belgica Secunda since the 480 s, see Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 40–41. Bachrach, *Merovingian Military Organization*, 5, dates the com-

completely discount the possibility that recent conflicts with rival Frankish kings and the Alamanni had destabilized the region, the conciliar subscriptions suggest a conscious plan to exclude bishops already integrated into the Frankish *regnum*.³⁴

The presence at Orléans of both the newly appointed bishops of the north, with their lack of competing political loyalties, and the Aquitanian bishops of the south, with their long-established spiritual and pastoral authority, both of which groups were to a greater or lesser degree now beholden to the Frankish king, ensured that the council's decisions would both conform to Clovis's agenda and possess the necessary *auctoritas* to be considered binding. So, whereas it is clear that the First Council of Orléans was no mere "Aquitanian occasion," to use Wallace-Hadrill's phrase, especially when one considers that nearly two-thirds of its total attendance came from northern Gaul, it was Clovis's recent victories that made the synod in its existing form possible as well as preferable, for it allowed the Frankish king to lay the foundation for a unified episcopal community consisting of both northern and southern Gallic prelates.³⁵ Furthermore, one might speculate on the basis of the absence of bishops from the Frankish homeland that Clovis was hoping to use this meeting as a means of validating his authority over prelates who would have remembered a time when the Frankish king himself was at best a pagan and at worst a near Arian, and who, unlike Remigius, were as yet unfamiliar with Clovis's willingness to rule in accordance with the counsel of Nicene bishops.

The location of the first Frankish council was as much a conscious decision on Clovis's part as was its attendance. Daly is certainly correct that Orléans was partly selected because of its centralized location in the southernmost tip of Lugdunensis Senonia, connected by Roman roads to *civitates* in both the north

pletion of his conquest of the province to 491. Cambrai, however, came into Clovis's hands only with his defeat of Ragnachar, following the Battle of Vouillé. As for Belgica Prima, Kurth, *Clovis*, 1.248–49n1, suggests that a siege of Verdun took place ca. 486/487, basing his conclusion on the account found in the anonymous *Vita Maximini Abbatis Miciacensis* 5, ed. Luc d'Achéry and Johannes Mabillon, AASS OSB 1 (Paris, 1668), 582; see also Bertarius, *Gesta Episcoporum Virdunensium* 4 (Waitz 41). But this is a late source (ca. 9th century), and Gauthier, *L'évangélisation des pays de la Moselle*, 151, has observed that "perhaps Clovis besieged the city, but there is no more information on Verdun than the rest of the region" (see also 121–22 on the uncertainty of who controlled Belgica Prima immediately prior to Clovis).

34 On Clovis's conflicts with Chararic and Ragnachar, see Greg. *DLH* 2.41–42 (Krusch and Levison, 91–93). Michel Rouche, *Clovis* (Paris, 1996), 206, suggests that Chararic, like Ragnachar, was established near Belgica Secunda. For the most recent account of Clovis's wars with the Alamanni, see John F. Drinkwater, *The Alamanni and Rome, 213–496: Caracalla to Clovis* (Oxford, 2007), 335–45.

35 J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983), 95.

and south.³⁶ But Daly's argument that the city's proximity to former-Visigothic Aquitania was not a factor in its selection and that the city's population and more established diocesan life were has less evidence to support it. Certainly, Orléans was a city with well-established ecclesiastical traditions. The city's cathedral is said to have been built in the later 4th century by Bishop Evurtius, although bishop lists record the names of earlier prelates going back to the mid-4th century.³⁷ The city's venerable Christian past did not, however, set it notably apart from other potential locations for Clovis's council. Tours, Bourges, and Poitiers, for example, all shared Orléans's general proximity to the other participating *civitates*, and all had lengthy ecclesiastical traditions stretching back into the Roman period.³⁸ But all three had been part of the Visigothic kingdom prior to 507. Furthermore, Daly's emphasis on population, for which he cites no sources, is questionable, given our poor estimates for any of the cities of Gaul in the early 6th century.

Orléans, it is important to note, was neither the religious center of its province—that designation belonged to the metropolitan see of Sens—nor was it the most important political center: Clovis has made Paris his capital following Vouillé.³⁹ In general, for the convokers of 6th-century Gallic councils, location seems to have been at least as important, and perhaps even more important, than a given city's size or prestige. In the year 517, for example, a major Burgundian council, uniting twenty-four bishops, met in the *parrochia* of Epaon, rather than in a larger *civitas* such as Vienne or Lyons.⁴⁰ Avitus of Vienne, in his convocation letter for the council, noted that the site had been chosen on account of its being “a central and opportune location for the meeting when we considered the fatigue of everyone.”⁴¹ Similarly, the bishops at the Second Council of Mâcon in 585, in scheduling a follow-up synod, ordered it to be convoked at a central location agreeable to all of the participants.⁴²

36 On the Gallic Roman road network see Raymond Chevallier, *Roman Roads*, trans. N. H. Field (Berkeley, 1976), 160–72.

37 Jean-Charles Picard et al., *Province ecclésiastique de Sens*, Topographie chrétienne des cites de la Gaule des origines au milieu du VIII^e siècle VIII (Paris, 1992), 81–96; Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, 2.459–60.

38 Greg. *DLH* 10.31 (Krusch and Levison 526) records that Catianus, the first bishop of Tours, took his seat in ca. A.D. 250. Additionally, he names Ursinus (fl. late 3rd century) as the first bishop of Bourges; Gregory of Tours, *Liber in Gloria Confessorum* 79, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 1.2 (Hanover, 1885), 346–48; Greg. *DLH* 1.31 (Krusch and Levison 24). As for Poitiers, although its episcopal list names bishops prior to Hilary (d. 367/368), Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, 2.79–82, argues that there is little compelling evidence for their holding of episcopal office.

39 Greg. *DLH* 2.38 (Krusch and Levison 89).

40 Epaone (517), *prae*f.

41 De Clercq, *Concilia Galliae*, 22–23.

42 Mâcon (585), chap. 20.

Gregory of Tours also describes a council held in the Auvergne in the year 590, as meeting *in confinio vero termini Arverni, Gabalitani atque Ruteni* for the convenience of the attendees.⁴³ Proximity to land or water routes was a necessity in order to ease the burden of travel for attendees who might have to journey hundreds of miles in order to attend a council. Orléans, with its ease of access and central location close to Clovis's own seat of power, thus proved a suitable location for the first Frankish synod.

But suitability alone does not entirely explain Clovis's choice. Orléans often has been described as a frontier city lying between the Frankish kingdom and the Visigothic annexed territories.⁴⁴ It initially had come into Clovis's hands following his incorporation of Armorica, several years before his war with the Visigoths.⁴⁵ It was also a city that lay on the very edge of the traditional zone of Gallic conciliar life. No councils had been held in the old diocese of Gallia since the 4th century, and its representation at other synods up until that point had been virtually nonexistent.⁴⁶ In choosing a location in northern Gaul for his council, Clovis was sending an unambiguous message that the Frankish church was not going to be merely a southern affair.⁴⁷ On the other hand, however, the presiding bishop was a southerner, Cyprian of Bordeaux, whom Clovis would have met during his sojourn in Bordeaux in winter 507–8, rather than a senior northerner, such as the absent Remigius of Reims.⁴⁸ But from the perspective of ecclesiastical politics, the choice of Cyprian over Remigius makes sense, assuming that one of Clovis's primary reasons for convoking the council was to use it to forge relationships with (and between) those bishops unfamiliar with his rule. Furthermore, in choosing Cyprian as council president, Clovis was implicitly acknowledging the experience and prestige of the southern attendees. Although northern bishops did dominate the Council of Orléans in numbers, southerners filled over one-third of the seats and, more importantly, brought with them a deeper familiarity with and connection to Gallic conciliar tradition. Both groups, however, needed to be assured that their voices would be heard in the ecclesiastical governance of Clovis's *regnum*. Thus, to use a modern analogy,

43 Greg. *DLH* 10.8 (Krusch and Levison 489).

44 Pontal, *Histoire des conciles mérovingiens*, 50. Heudin, "Le Concile d'Orléans de 511," 438, acknowledges this point, but puts a greater emphasis on the city's central location.

45 B. S. Bachrach, "Procopius and the Chronology of Clovis's Reign," *Viator* 1 (1970): 21–31; idem, *Merovingian Military Organization*, 10.

46 Evurtius of Orléans possibly attended the Council of Valence in 374. Additionally, Declopetus of Orléans's subscription is attached to the *acta* of the pseudo-Council of Cologne (346).

47 Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*, 259.

48 Kurth, *Clovis*, 2.136. It is possible that Clovis met Cyprian even earlier, when the Franks captured Bordeaux in 498. Unfortunately, we do not know what year Cyprian took office, so this is mere conjecture.

the *civitas* of Orléans served much the same purpose for the early Frankish church as Washington DC did for the founders of the American republic: a capital geographically situated so as to unite two disparate regions in common governance. It was, for Clovis, the southernmost northern city. Its location encouraged integration, not further alienation between the bishops of southern and northern Gaul.

The same observation can be made for the council's legislative program. There has long been general agreement that Clovis played no small role in its formulation, although little agreement on precisely what his role was.⁴⁹ Clovis did not attend the council and therefore was not present for either its deliberations or final formulations of policy. On the other hand, his *tituli* served as the basis for discussion, and his *maior auctoritas* was deemed necessary by the participants to ensure that the council's legislation was suitably enforced.⁵⁰ Although Clovis's influence has been most closely associated with the first ten canons of the council's record—which address issues of ecclesiastical asylum, clerical ordination, ecclesiastical property management, the prosecution of clerics for civil crimes, and the incorporation of Arian clerics and churches into the Frankish church—there seems no reason to limit his possible input only to those canons concerned with the intersection between ecclesiastical and worldly affairs.⁵¹ For Clovis, governance of his kingdom and the church were not mutually exclusive exercises. Even prior to his baptism, Clovis had been encouraged by Remigius to conceive of a *regnum* ruled by a king in consultation with his bishops. In his first letter to the Frankish king, written subsequent to the latter's assumption of power in Belgica Secunda, Remigius advised Clovis that his rule over the province would be better assured if he worked in harmony with his prelates.⁵² Similarly, in his second letter to the king, Remigius urged Clovis to govern his *regnum* vigilantly, with *consilia erectiora*.⁵³ Given the content of his first letter, it is not unlikely that Remigius had the Gallo-Roman episcopate in mind when he proffered this advice.

If the bishops present at Clovis's first council can be believed, the king took Remigius's advice to heart and convoked the synod "out of concern for episcopal opinion."⁵⁴ The ideal king, for Remigius, was one who governed in accordance

49 See, e.g., Louis Duchesne, *L'Eglise au VI siècle* (Paris, 1925), 501; Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, 95; Eugen Ewig, *Die Merowinger und das Frankenreich* (Stuttgart, 1988), 30–31; Pontal, *Histoire des conciles mérovingiens*, 50; Daly, "Clovis: How Barbaric, How Pagan?" 659–62.

50 Orléans, *praef.*

51 Daly, "Clovis: How Barbaric, How Pagan?" 659n131.

52 *Epistolae Austrasicae* 2, ed. Wilhelm Gundlach, MGH Epist. 3 (Berlin, 1892), 113.

53 *Epistolae Austrasicae* 1 (Gundlach 112–3).

54 Daly, "Clovis: How Barbaric, How Pagan?" 656, translates *affectu* as "respect," which does not convey adequately the emotional connotations of the word.

with the will of the church and its bishops. Clovis adopted this ideal, but, like his model Constantine, his stance toward the church was marked as much by paternalism as deference. Encouraged early on in his rule to see the ecclesiastical and worldly spheres of his *regnum* as connected, he understood them both to be his responsibility. We can first perceive Clovis's attitude toward ecclesiastical governance in his letter to the bishops of Aquitania, written around 507/508, but summarizing the contents of an order given to his army at the outset of the Gothic campaign.⁵⁵ In his letter, Clovis previews some of the concerns of the council he would convoke several years later and demonstrates a "familiarity with the administrative structure and ethos of the church."⁵⁶ Specifically, Clovis assured the Aquitanian bishops that property belonging to the church (including slaves) would not be seized unjustly, and he also encouraged the prelates to intercede on behalf of prisoners of war and explained the proper procedures by which they might do so. Over half a dozen of the canons issued at the Council of Orléans would deal with concerns regarding ecclesiastical property, whereas the fifth canon declared that a portion of the revenues from gifts made by Clovis to the church should be allocated specifically for the redemption of prisoners.⁵⁷ If it is true, as some have suggested, that Clovis's Nicene baptism did not occur until 508, after his victory over the Visigoths, then the letter becomes an even more telling indicator of the king's initial realization of his role vis-à-vis the church and the necessity of gaining the support of the Gallic episcopate in order to consolidate his rule.⁵⁸ Clovis's paternalism toward the church therefore should not be mistaken for despotism; he was its protector, not its master, and he required its support as much as it required his.

It was at the Council of Orléans that Clovis cemented both his role in ecclesiastical governance and a new identity for the Gallic church itself. It is not so surprising that Clovis waited several years after his victory over Alaric before officially convoking his council, especially if his Nicene baptism did not occur until 508 and if military operations against the Goths distracted him during these intervening years.⁵⁹ The integration of the southern bishops into the new

55 On the dating of this letter, see Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 47; Daly, "Clovis: How Barbaric, How Pagan?" 645; D. R. Shanzer, "Dating the Baptism of Clovis: The Bishop of Vienne vs. the Bishop of Tours," *Early Medieval Europe* 7.1 (1998): 29–57 at 47–50.

56 Daly, "Clovis: How Barbaric, How Pagan?" 646.

57 Those canons dealing with concerns regarding church property are nos. 5, 6, 7, 14, 15, 17, 23. On the redemption of prisoners as a duty of bishops, see William Klingshirn, "Charity and Power: Caesarius of Arles and the Ransoming of Captives in Sub-Roman Gaul," *Journal of Roman Studies* 75 (1985): 183–203.

58 For arguments supporting a late date for Clovis's baptism, see Shanzer, "Dating the Baptism of Clovis," 29–57; I. N. Wood, "Gregory of Tours and Clovis," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 63.2 (1985): 249–72 at 268–70; and Wood's essay in this volume.

59 Procop. *Wars* 5.12.33–49.

Frankish church was an important part of Clovis's consolidation of Visigothic territory, but it could occur only after certain preconditions were met and after a degree of stability had been established throughout the expanded Frankish *regnum*. The council's legislative program certainly did not include matters pertinent only to the newly acquired Aquitanian territories, although the repetition of issues similar to those discussed at the Council of Agde may be indicative of an attempt to address some of the specific concerns of the southern prelates, six of whom—Cyprianus of Bordeaux, Tetradius of Bourges, Cronopius of Périgueux, Quintianus of Rodez, Boetius of Cahors, and Nicetius of Auch—attended both the Councils of Agde and Orléans.⁶⁰ Both synods, for example, forbade laymen from leaving church before the end of the mass,⁶¹ both rebuked monks who abandoned their monasteries without permission,⁶² both legislated the proper observance of Easter, Christmas, and Pentecost,⁶³ and both condemned the practice of divination.⁶⁴

With the important exception of the canon regulating the absorption of Arian clerics and basilicas into the Nicene church,⁶⁵ the majority of the Orléans canons deal implicitly, rather than explicitly with Clovis's recent victories and the subsequent issues raised by the unification of the Gallic church under Frankish rule. Indeed, the bulk of the canonical legislation promulgated at the council can be read as the result of compromise between royal and episcopal expectations for this new state of affairs. On the one hand, the church's right to grant asylum was confirmed,⁶⁶ as was the authority of bishops over ecclesiastical property;⁶⁷ while on the other hand the council acknowledged the king's right to have a say in the clerical ordination of laymen⁶⁸ and permitted the church's ownership of its landed assets to be challenged in court.⁶⁹ The conciliar participants also agreed upon the proper use of revenues earned from those *oblationes* and *agri* donated by Clovis to the church and forbade lower clerics

60 For negative assessments of the Council of Agde's influence on Orléans legislative program, see De Clercq, *La législation religieuse franque*, 9; Daly, "Clovis: How Barbaric, How Pagan?" 657. De Clercq, unlike Daly, does accept the influence of Agde, chap. 47 on Orléans, chap. 26. Bishops Eufasius of Clermont and Sextilius of Bazas, who were represented at the Council of Agde, attended the Council of Orléans.

61 Agde, chap. 47; Orléans, chap. 26.

62 Agde, chap. 38; Orléans, chap. 22.

63 Agde, chap. 21; Orléans, chap. 25.

64 Agde, chap. 42; Orléans, chap. 30.

65 Orléans, chap. 10.

66 Orléans, chaps. 1–3.

67 Orléans, chaps. 5, 7, 14, 15, 17, 23.

68 Orléans, chap. 4.

69 Orléans, chap. 6.

from receiving *beneficia* from the king without episcopal approval.⁷⁰ It therefore is not surprising that the canonical record of the council has been called a “concordance” between the Gallic church and the Frankish crown.⁷¹

But more than a mere concordance, the canons of the First Council of Orléans were a reflection of Clovis’s realization of a new Frankish church, Gallo-Roman in spirit and tradition, but forged through victory on the battlefield. As a result of his conquests, Clovis had inherited a complex and deep-rooted network of episcopal cities arranged into metropolitan provinces. His victory necessitated that new political borders be superimposed upon these traditional provincial units. The organization of the Gallic church, which never was entirely static, reflected the legacy of stable Roman administration. And while this legacy did not entirely dissipate in the 6th century, provincial borders and metropolitan power undeniably lost some of their significance in the political transition to Frankish rule. Nevertheless, Clovis did not substitute anarchy for organization. In 511 his goal was to demonstrate to those Gallo-Roman bishops who recently had found themselves living in a Frankish *regnum* that not only was there a place for them under his recently catholicized regime, but also that their church too could be integrated into the new political reality. Thus, merely in its assembly the Council of Orléans was an unqualified success; that it succeeded in demonstrating the validity of a Frankish church is a testament to Clovis’s ability to turn Remigius’s advice into a workable approach to governance.

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70 Orléans, chaps. 5, 7. Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, 95, assumes that the land being donated by Clovis was “the property of the Arian clergy of the Visigoths,” although there is no direct evidence in the canons to suggest that this was the case. De Clercq, *Concilia Galliae*, 6, note canon 5, assumes the same. See also Daly, “Clovis: How Barbarian, How Pagan?” 658.

71 Duchesne, *L’Eglise au VI siècle*, 502; Heuclin, “Le Concile d’Orléans de 511,” 435–50.

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Ravenna, Saint Martin, and the Battle of Vouillé

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Agnellus of Ravenna, in his *Liber pontificalis ecclesiae Ravennatis*, describes the conversion of Arian churches to orthodoxy during the episcopate of Bishop Agnellus (557–70):¹

Igitur iste beatissimus omnes Gothorum ecclesias reconciliavit, quae Gothorum temporibus vel regis Theodoric constructae sunt, quae Ariana perfidia et haereticorum secta doctrina et credulitate tenebantur. . . . Igitur reconciliavit beatissimus Agnellus pontifex infra hanc urbem ecclesiam sancti Martini confessoris quam Theodoricus rex fundavit, quae vocatur Caelum Aureum; tribunal et utrasque parietes de imaginibus martirum virginumque incedentium tessellis decoravit. . . . In tribunali vero, si diligenter inquisieritis, super fenestras invenietis ex lapideis litteris exaratum ita: “Theodoricus rex hanc ecclesiam a fundamentis in nomine Domini nostri Iesu Christi fecit.”

Therefore this most blessed one reconciled all the churches of the Goths that were built in the times of the Goths or of King Theodoric that were held by Arian falsehood and the sect, doctrine and credulity of the heretics. . . . Therefore the most blessed Bishop Agnellus reconciled the Church of Saint Martin the confessor in this city, which King Theodoric founded, which is called the Golden Heaven; he decorated the apse and both sidewalls with images in mosaic of processions of martyrs and virgins. . . . Indeed in the apse, if you look closely, you will find the following written above the windows in stone letters: “King Theodoric made this church from its foundations in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Agnellus’s account is confirmed by a papyrus document that survives in Ravenna, dated to between 565 and 570, that discusses the patrimony of the former Gothic churches and refers specifically to a church dedicated to Saint Martin.² The account is also confirmed by mosaics that still survive in the

1 Agnellus, *Liber pontificalis ecclesiae Ravennatis* 86, ed. D. M. Deliyannis, CCCM 199 (Turnhout, 2006), 253.

2 Jan-Olof Tjäder, ed., *Die nichtliterarischen lateinischen Papyri Italiens aus der Zeit 445–700* (Lund, 1954), 1.178–83 no. 2. This document concerns property formerly belonging to the Arian church and includes mention of a piece of property *ad Sanctum Martinum*, presumed to be this church (see Berenice Cavarra, Gabriella Gardini, Giovanni Battista Parente and Giorgio Vespignani, “Gli archivi come fonti della storia di Ravenna: regesto dei documenti,” in *Storia di Ravenna*, vol. 2.2: *Dall’età bizantina all’età ottoniana: Territorio, economia e società*, ed. Antonio Carile [Venice, 1991], 401–547 at 405n3).

church. Saint Martin leads a procession of male martyrs along the south nave wall of the church today known as Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, between a depiction of the *palatium* of Ravenna and the enthroned Christ at the east end of the nave. It is generally agreed that this procession of martyrs was a later-6th-century replacement, on the occasion of the rededication of the church, for some unknown representation that stood between the *palatium* and Christ.³ Most scholarly studies of the mosaic program have focused on the *palatium* mosaic, what it represents, and the figures that were apparently erased from it. Much less attention has been paid to the procession of martyrs, beyond analyzing who they represent and to what litanies they might relate.⁴

In the literature on Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, explanations of the dedication to Saint Martin and of his iconography are brief and unsatisfying. Otto von Simson, who saw political machinations behind every column in Ravenna, explained Martin's leadership of the procession of male saints in Sant' Apollinare Nuovo, and the dedication of the church to him, as an expression of anti-Arianism, since Martin by this time was renowned for being an anti-Arian saint.⁵ F. W. Deichmann, in his comprehensive discussion of Ravenna's history, architecture, and art, is curiously reticent about Martin's role in the church. He repeats von Simson's assertion, adding that it is Martin's antiheretical, rather than specifically anti-Arian, stance that was seen as significant when a formerly Arian church was converted to orthodox worship.⁶ Arthur Urbano, in a recent article on the rededication to orthodoxy of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo, likewise

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- 3 For a detailed history of this mosaic and its various phases of restoration, see Emanuela Penni Iacco, *La basilica di S. Apollinare Nuovo attraverso i secoli* (Bologna, 2004). For questions about what the procession might have replaced, see also the discussion following I. N. Wood's paper in *The Ostrogoths from the Migration Period to the Sixth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. Sam J. Barnish and Federico Marazzi (Woodbridge UK, 2007), 271–73; and also D. M. Deliyannis, *Ravenna in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2010), 160–72.
 - 4 Otto von Simson, *Sacred Fortress: Byzantine Art and Statecraft in Ravenna* (Princeton, 1948), 84–98.
 - 5 von Simson, *Sacred Fortress*, 83, notes that in the *Missale gothicum* Martin is specifically praised for his anti-Arianism (*Digne Arrianorum non subiacuit feritate* at 138n52); however, this text dates to the 7th century and thus does not necessarily reflect conditions at the beginning of the 6th.
 - 6 Friedrich Wilhelm Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes*, vol. 1: *Geschichte und Monumente* (Wiesbaden, 1969), 171. Deichmann also notes in vol. 2.1 (Wiesbaden, 1974), 129, that Martin had already had a presence in Ravenna in the Church of Saints John and Paul, where he had a reputation as a healer; the source for this is Fortunatus, whose text we will consider below, describing an event that took place in about 565.

does not comment on the choice of Saint Martin.⁷ If all that was required was an anti-Arian saint, surely others were closer to hand: Ambrose of Milan, for example, or Severinus of Noricum. The premier Frankish anti-Arian of the period was Hilary of Poitiers.⁸ Saint Martin was not a martyr *stricto sensu*, yet in Ravenna he leads a procession of martyrs. Perhaps, in the words of Ennodius, his asceticism gave him special dispensation: *Labore magno martyr est / Victore carnis spiritu*.⁹

A. S. McKinley has recently suggested that Martin's reputation as an anti-Arian, closely linked to the Merovingian monarchs, originated with Gregory of Tours in the 580s and 590s, an origin too late to explain the rededication of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo.¹⁰ However, as I hope to show, the choice of Saint Martin for Ravenna proves McKinley right that the anti-Arian reputation of Martin was closely connected to the Merovingian monarchy, but wrong that it was invented by Gregory of Tours. In fact, it was the Battle of Vouillé that consolidated Martin's reputation as an anti-Arian saint, and the ramifications of this battle meant that the rededication of Theodoric's church carried both religious and political overtones. I will therefore first explore the anti-Arian identity of Saint Martin in the 5th and 6th centuries and then link it to the Ostrogoths and Ravenna.¹¹

Saint Martin of Tours and Arianism

The first account of Martin was a *Vita* (hereafter *VSM*) written by Sulpicius Severus in the 390s, before the saint's death. Martin was born in Pannonia but raised in Pavia.¹² He went to Gaul to seek out Hilary of Poitiers, but his early

7 Arthur Urbano, "Donation, Dedication and *Damnatio Memoriae*: The Catholic Reconciliation of Ravenna and the Church of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 13 (2005): 71–110.

8 See recently Daniel H. Williams, "The Anti-Arian Campaigns of Hilary of Poitiers and the 'Liber Contra Auxentium,'" *Church History* 61 (1992): 7–22.

9 Ennodius of Pavia, *Hymnus sancti Martini*, *Carmina* 1.20, ed. F. Vogel, MGH AA 7 (Berlin, 1885), 255. Jacques Fontaine, "Sulpice Sévère a-t-il travesti Saint Martin de Tours en martyr militaire?" *Analecta Bollandiana* 81 (1963): 31–58 at 32 cites also Sulpicius Severus, *Epistula* 2.9: *Licet ei ratio temporis non potuerit praestare martyrium, gloria tamen martyris non carebit*, and suggests that Sulpicius deliberately evoked *topoi* associated with martyrs in his *vita* of Martin to raise his status, in an era in which martyrdom still conveyed the highest level of sanctity.

10 Allan Scott McKinley, "The First Two Centuries of Saint Martin of Tours," *Early Medieval Europe* 14.2 (2006): 173–200.

11 Some of these questions were raised in the discussion following Wood's paper in *The Ostrogoths*, 270, but without any resolution.

12 Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini*, ed. Jacques Fontaine, SC 133–35 (Paris, 1967–69).

monastic career was interrupted by Arians (*VSM* 6), by whom he was publicly beaten; even when he went back to Milan, the Arians continued to persecute him. He stood fast, however, and when Hilary returned to Poitiers in 361, Martin followed him, becoming bishop of Tours from 371 until his death in 397. In the *VSM* Martin takes action against pagans; in Sulpicius's *Dialogues* (3.11) and the *Chronica* (2.50), written before 400, the author mentions Martin's conflicts with Priscillianists, but Arians do not appear. Indeed, in his *Chronica* Sulpicius specifically says that Arianism was driven from Gaul through the efforts of Hilary of Poitiers alone.¹³ Thus, according to Sulpicius Severus, Martin was at one point a victim of persecution by Arians, but not an active adversary of the heresy.¹⁴

In the 470s Paulinus of Périgueux versified Sulpicius's *Dialogues* and *Vita* and added more miracles.¹⁵ He followed Sulpicius very closely with regard to Arianism, recounting Martin and Hilary's exile from Gaul and then Milan.¹⁶ Paulinus was more stridently anti-Arian than Sulpicius Severus, referring to the *virus ab insano quod fuderat Arrius ore*, but for Paulinus, as for Sulpicius, Martin was victim rather than attacker. Raymond Van Dam has suggested that Martin was promoted at Tours in the 460s as an orthodox champion against Arianism,¹⁷ but the saint seems to have been an indirect champion at best.¹⁸ Tours was under Visigothic rule until the Battle of Vouillé, and thus it seems unlikely that Martin's reputation could have depended on an anti-Arian platform.¹⁹ Anti-Arianism is likewise absent from a sermon written in praise of Martin, probably in Tours, sometime between the mid-5th and mid-6th century. Martin is praised for dividing his cloak, for his healing miracles, and for blessing Tours with his presence, but Arianism is never mentioned.²⁰ And finally, Ennodius of Pavia,

13 Sulpicius Severus, *Chronica* 2.45, 50, ed. Carl Halm, CSEL 1 (Vienna, 1866).

14 See Raymond Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul* (Princeton, 1993), 18.

15 McKinley, "First Two Centuries," 189, notes that this action in the 5th century transformed Martin from a universal ascetic figure to a saint bound to the city of Tours.

16 Paulinus of Périgueux, *Vita Martini* 1.238–93, ed. Michael Petschenig, CSEL 16.1 (Vienna, 1888), 28.

17 Raymond Van Dam, "Images of Saint Martin in Late Roman and Early Merovingian Gaul," *Viator* 19 (1988): 1–27 at 13–14; idem, *Saints and Their Miracles*, 17.

18 The dedication of a church to Gervasius and Protasius in Tours in the mid-5th century does seem to have Ambrosian anti-Arian overtones, but it is only Gregory of Tours who attributes this construction to Saint Martin; see *Gloria Martyrum* 46, ed. W. Arndt and Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 1.2 (Hanover, 1885), 519; also *DLH* 10.31.5, ed. Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRM 1.1 (Hanover, 1951), 529. In both passages Gregory refers to a letter of Paulinus, now lost.

19 McKinley, "First Two Centuries," 190.

20 For the date, see *ibid.*; text in *PL Supplementum* 4.602–3; translated in Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles*, 304–7.

the panegyrist of the Ostrogothic king Theodoric, wrote a hymn in praise of Martin that emphasized his role as ascetic and miracle worker, while making no mention of heresy. In sum, up to 500, Martin was admired for his asceticism, for healing miracles, and for his role as a bishop, rather than for his stance against Arians.

But between 500 and the 560s, Martin's reputation underwent a change. The next text to mention him is a letter written in the mid-560s by Bishop Nicetius of Trier to the Frankish princess Clotsinda, queen of the Lombards (563–65), in which he implores her to convince her husband Alboin to convert to Nicene Christianity. Nicetius seems most anxious about the influence of Arian Christians who preached at Alboin's court.²¹ Saint Martin is praised, along with others such as Germanus of Auxerre, Hilary of Poitiers, and Lupus of Trier, for the efficacy of their healing miracles in comparison to those of Arian saints. Nicetius then cites as an example of the power of orthodoxy Clovis's military successes against the Arian Visigoths and Burgundians, resulting from the intercession of Martin.²²

Thus the Battle of Vouillé seems to play a central role in the configuration of the virtues of Frankish saints. Martin, Germanus, Hilary, Lupus, and the others mentioned by Nicetius are precisely those saints whose documentation would reach new heights a few decades later in the hagiography of Fortunatus and Gregory of Tours. By the 570s, credit for the Battle of Vouillé was variously ascribed to Hilary and Martin, and each had his champion. In the writings of Fortunatus, Hilary of Poitiers is the anti-Arian champion who provides the divine aid that enabled Clovis to win the Battle of Vouillé: "He [Hilary] did not cease to battle heretical enemies in spirit as he had formerly in the flesh; he believed that in going against the Arian Alaric he again attacked Constantius. . . . For he who formerly fought in the synod with steadfast words to confound the enemy, bore arms victoriously on the battlefield."²³ Fortunatus grants Martin some anti-Arian credentials; in his *VSM*, building on what Sulpicius Severus said about Martin's persecution by Arians, Fortunatus actually expresses

21 See Steven C. Fanning, "Lombard Arianism Reconsidered," *Speculum* 56 (1981): 241–58.

22 *Epistolae Austrasiacae* 7.8, ed. Wilhelm Gundlach, MGH Epist. 3 (Berlin, 1892), 119–22: *Cum ista, quae supra dixi, probata cognovit, humilis ad domni Martini limina cecidit et baptizare se sine mora promisit, qui baptizatus quanta in hereticos Alaricum vel Gundobadum regum fecerit, audisti.*

23 Ven. Fort. *Liber de virtutibus sancti Hilari* 7.23, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH AA 4.2 (Berlin, 1885), 9: *Contra haereticas acies sicut olim in corpore non cessavit spiritu dimicare: credebatur sibi contra Halaricum Arrianum iterum redire Constantium. Quanta est illi semper pro cultu catholicae religionis aviditas, cum in requie posito adhuc sollicitudinis non desit ubertas? Nam qui tunc in synodo ad confundendum hostem verba fidelia protulit, hic in campo arma tractavit victoria.*

anti-Arian dogma and gives Martin's body over to additional torment on behalf of orthodoxy.²⁴ But he does not mention the Battle of Vouillé.

It is Gregory of Tours who first championed Martin's role at Vouillé. In *DLH* 2.37–38 he notes that Clovis justified his war against the Visigoths as an anti-Arian crusade. Clovis shows respect for Saint Martin throughout the campaign, killing one of his own soldiers who acts impiously at Tours: "It is no good expecting to win this fight if we offend Saint Martin." He sends gifts to Saint Martin's church at Tours and asks for his support, which he receives. Gregory also tells of Hilary's support for Clovis, a pillar of fire that "seemed to move toward Clovis as a sign that with the support of the blessed Saint he might the more easily overcome the heretic host, against which Hilary himself had so often done battle for the faith."²⁵ God grants Clovis the victory at Vouillé, and immediately thereafter (according to Gregory) he returns to Tours, gives more gifts to Martin, and in Martin's church receives the consular insignia from Emperor Anastasius. As McKinley and others have noted, Gregory was the master propagandist for Martin and emphasizes every interaction of a Frankish king with the saint to forge a clear connection between the monarchy and Tours.²⁶ But Gregory cannot have invented the story from whole cloth; the connection between Martin, Clovis, and Vouillé already existed, as we have seen in Nicetius's letter. As Van Dam shows, although Gregory attempted to forge a strong relationship between Martin and the Merovingian monarchs, the Frankish kings paid relatively little attention to Martin both in the 6th and subsequent centuries.²⁷

24 Ven. Fort. *Vita Martini* 1.114–20, ed. Friedrich Leo, MGH AA 4.1 (Berlin, 1881), 299.

25 Greg. *DLH* 2.37–38, ed. Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRM 1.1 (Hanover, 1951), 85–89. Gregory's *Histories* otherwise downplay the role of Hilary in the history of Christian Gaul, although he does mention that he wrote books against the heretics (1.38) and that he was exiled because of his orthodoxy (*Hist.* 3. *prae*f.). Interestingly Gregory does not report that Martin came to Gaul in order to meet Hilary, which is what appears in all of the other biographies of Martin.

26 Alan Thacker, "Peculiaris Patronus Noster: The Saint as Patron of the State in the Early Middle Ages," in *The Medieval State: Essays Presented to James Campbell*, ed. John R. Maddicott and D. M. Palliser (London, 2000), 1–24 at 5–8, notes that Avitus of Vienne called Martin "Gaul's chosen particular pastor" (MGH AA 6.2, 195), but otherwise Thacker's argument about Martin is based on the writings of Gregory of Tours.

27 Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles*, 22–28; see also Thacker, "Peculiaris patronus noster."

The Cult of Saint Martin in Italy

Although not as widespread as Martin's cult in France, veneration of the saintly bishop of Tours spread into Italy in the course of the 5th century. Paulinus of Nola had been cured of an eye ailment by Martin in about 389; he subsequently moved from Bordeaux to Nola in Italy, whence he corresponded with his friend Sulpicius Severus and no doubt was involved in the transmission of the latter's *Vita Martini* in Italy.²⁸ Ennodius's hymn to Martin shows that the cult had spread to Pavia by the early 6th century at least. Furthermore, around 499 Pope Symmachus dedicated a church in Rome to Saints Martin and Silvester, a curious pairing that remains unexplained;²⁹ it is the first dedication of a church in Rome to a non-Roman saint and a confessor.³⁰ Martin's Italian upbringing may have played a role in this commemoration; Ennodius may have considered him a Pavian saint (although his other hymns praise Cyprian, Stephen, Ambrose, Euphemia, Nazarius, and Dionysius, none specifically Pavian). Ennodius or Pope Symmachus would hardly have imported the cult of an openly anti-Arian saint into Ostrogothic Italy around 500: Martin's fame at this time cannot have been connected with the fight against Arianism.

Two further references to the cult of Martin in Ostrogothic Italy postdate the death of Theodoric. Saint Benedict founded an *oraculum* to Saint Martin in the former temple of Apollo at Montecassino in the 530s.³¹ Moreover, a late-8th-century manuscript illustration of Cassiodorus's monastery at Vivarium indicates that there was a chapel dedicated to Saint Martin; if this were datable

- 28 On Paulinus of Nola's death in 431, according to his follower Uranius, *De obitu Sancti Paulini ad Pacatum*, PL 53.859–66 at 861 A, the saint had a vision of Saints Januarius and Martin. Sulpicius's *VSM* is mentioned by Paulinus in the introduction to his *Vita Ambrosii*, written in the first decades of the 5th century; see Yves-Marie Duval, "Les rapports de la Gaule et de la Cisalpine dans l'histoire religieuse du IV^e siècle," in *Aquileia e l'Occident*, Antichità altoadriatiche 19 (Udine, 1981), 259–77 at 275–76. Solange Quesnel, *Venance Fortunat: oeuvres*, vol. 4: *Vie de Saint Martin* (Paris, 1996), xxiv, xxxii, suggests that Fortunatus might have encountered Sulpicius Severus's *VSM* in Ravenna, before he went to Francia.
- 29 Richard Krautheimer, Wolfgang Frankl, and Spencer Corbett, *Corpus basilicarum Romae/ The Early Christian Basilicas of Rome (IV–IX Cent.)* (Vatican City, 1967), 3.122, note that the foundation by Silvester was originally called the *Titulus Equitii* or the *Titulus Silvestri*, and that after 499 the Church of Saint Martin is sometimes identified as a separate structure and sometimes as an administrative unit together with Saint Silvester. However, no explanation for the choice of Martin is given.
- 30 Eugen Ewig, "Die Martinskult im Frühmittelalter," *Archiv für mittelhochdeutsche Kirchengeschichte* 14 (1962): 11–30 at 15.
- 31 Gregory the Great, *Liber dialogorum* 2.8, ed. Adalbert de Vogüé, SC 251, 260, 265 (Paris, 1978–80). Gregory the Great also writes several letters in which monasteries or nunneries dedicated to Saint Martin are mentioned; see *S. Gregorii Magni registorum epistularum* 3.23; 5.4, 33, 50, ed. Dag Norberg, CCSL 140 (Turnhout, 1982).

to the foundation by Cassiodorus in the 540s or 550s, it would be valuable evidence for the veneration of this saint by a key member of the Ostrogothic court circle. Both of these passages probably attest Martin's reputation as an ascetic.

The next evidence for Martin in Italy comes from Fortunatus, who in fact commends his *VSM* to friends in Italy.³² At the end of the *VSM* Fortunatus narrates a journey from Tours to Ravenna, describing churches and their saints along the way. He mentions, among other things, a picture of the deeds of Saint Martin in the Church of Saint Justina in Padua.³³ When he gets to Ravenna he describes the brand-new churches dedicated to San Vitale and Sant' Apollinare in Classe, and then he tells us that he had long ago been cured of an eye ailment by praying before an image of Saint Martin found in the Church of Saints John and Paul in Ravenna.³⁴ It was this cure, Fortunatus implies, that motivated him to travel to Tours in 566, when he made the journey that he now describes in reverse. It is curious that the *VSM*, which seems to have been written in the early 570s, makes no mention of the rededication of Theodoric's church to Saint Martin, presumed to have taken place before 570.³⁵ Given the nature of Fortunatus's text, one would expect him to mention this information if he had it. We must conclude that Fortunatus did not have the most up-to-date news from Ravenna and that the rededication and mosaic date to after 566, when he had left.

Visual Evidence from Sant' Apollinare Nuovo

The current image of Saint Martin in Sant'Apollinare Nuovo is largely a 19th-century restoration; most of the figure was destroyed in the 17th century to make room for an organ, and all that survives of the original is part of the halo, Martin's back, and the letters *RTINUS*.³⁶ These fragments indicate that Martin was wearing a purple mantle, unlike the white ones of all the martyrs, but the color of his tunic and his hand gestures remain unknown. Fontaine proposed that this purple mantle signified a confessor, in contrast to the white robes worn by the martyrs in the rest of the procession; however, Lawrence wears a gold

32 Ven. Fort. *VSM* 4.702–3, ed. Quesnel, 101; Van Dam, "Images," 10.

33 See Ewig, "Die Martinskult," 15.

34 Ven. Fort. *VSM* 1.43–44, 4.689–701, ed. Quesnel, 7, 100–101.

35 See note 2 above.

36 The organ was installed sometime between 1580 and 1699; a 16th-century description indicates that the figure had been Saint Martin. The current figure of Saint Martin is a reconstruction made in 1857–62 by Felice Kibel. See the detailed accounts in Penni Iacco, *La basilica*, 104, 110, 119–20, 128–29, and summarized on 156–59.

tunic and a white mantle, which have not been explained.³⁷ Deichmann rejected earlier attempts to link this procession with Byzantine court ceremonial, on the grounds that there are no comparable examples to support the connections.³⁸ Since Deichmann's study, scholars have been more interested in speculating on what was originally depicted in this location than in understanding the meaning of the procession.³⁹

Earlier in the *VSM*, Fortunatus describes the place of Martin among the inhabitants of the heavenly court:⁴⁰

Among the apostolic hosts and the holy prophets
and choruses of martyrs and the gleaming troops of heaven,
where under the unconquered King that army glistens,
arrayed by squadrons, legions, cohorts and their officers,
rising by stages from soldier to *comes* to *dux* to consul;
this one's milky-white toga gleams, that one's crown sparkles red,
a purple-bordered toga shines on this one, a diadem adorns that one,
a chlamys embellishes these, a topaz bracelet those,
a belt gleams on this one, a fillet illumines the hair of that one,
this one shimmers with the honor of a palmate toga, that one with a *trabea*,
and purple, linen, gold and gems pick out the decoration.
Our eyes do not see what the senate beyond the stars is like;
but you, Martin, will enjoy these good things under the prince of heaven,
united with the angelic and patriarchal throngs,
like the apostles in merit, equal to the prophets,
linked to the martyrs, those reddened by a surge of blood,
o gleaming confessor, surpassing the lily in radiance,
crowned with shining light, a worthy radiance,
freely walking through the high palaces of the King,
a mighty man enrolled as a citizen in the everlasting age;
as a standard bearer you bear the weapons, ennobled by triumphs, of the cross.

37 Fontaine, "Sulpice Sévère," 31; however, such color symbolism was not fixed; see also Paulinus of Nola, *Carmina* 18.138–53, ed. G. de Hartel, CSEL 30 (Vienna, 1894), who describes Saint Felix of Nola as receiving a purple robe from Christ, like a martyr, even though Felix was not a martyr.

38 Deichmann, *Ravenna: Hauptstadt*, 2.1, 149–50. The earliest information on imperial court costume comes from the 8th and 10th centuries.

39 Penni Iacco, *La basilica*, e.g., offers no explanation.

40 Ven. Fort. *VSM* 2.446–64, ed. Quesnel, 48–49.

- inter apostolicas acies sacrosque prophetas
 martyriique choros atque agmina fulgida caeli,
 rege sub invicto qua exercitus ille coruscat
 per turmas, proceres, legiones atque cohortes
 450 milite seu comite et gradibus duce consule crescens,
 lacteus iste toga, rutilus micat ille corona,
 hunc praetexta nitens, illum diadema facetat,
 hos chlamys, ast illos armilla topaza decorat,
 balteus huic radiat, huic infula crine coruscat,
 455 alter palmatae, trabeae nitet alter honore,
 pingit et ornatum gemma aurum purpura byssus,
 nec videt hoc oculus quod habet super astra senatus:
 hic frueris, Martine, bonis sub principe caeli,
 coetibus angelicis sociabilis et patriarchis,
 460 conpar apostolicis meritis, aequande prophetis,
 addite martyribus, rubricat quibus unda cruoris,
 fulgide confessor, candentia lilia vinceus,
 lumine purpureo redimite, decore corusce,
 liberius gradiens per celsa palatia regis,
 465 vir transcripte potens aeterna in saecula civis;
 signifer arma crucis fers nobilitata triumphis.

Fortunatus here provides a striking ekphrasis of the heavenly court that echoes the imperial one, complete with costumes and ranks of officials. That (a) Fortunatus came from Ravenna, (b) possibly sent his poem to friends in Ravenna, and (c) with the poem specifically associated with Saint Martin invites comparison with the imagery in Sant' Apollinare Nuovo.⁴¹ Not only do the martyrs and virgins above the nave arcade approach the enthroned Christ and Virgin, but in the register above, between the windows, are found thirty-two (originally thirty-four) additional members of the heavenly court, usually identified as prophets, apostles, evangelists, and patriarchs and dating from the time of Theodoric.⁴² While it would be going too far to suggest that Fortunatus's poem influenced the imagery in the rededicated church, nonethe-

41 See Brian Brennan, "Being Martin': Saint and Successor in Sixth-Century Tours," *Journal of Religious History* 21 (1997): 121–35 at 128–29, who compares Fortunatus's depiction of Martin as a senator in the court of Christ to the procession at Sant' Apollinare Nuovo. Van Dam, "Images," 11, comments on Fortunatus's construction of Martin as a senator in heaven, although in his lifetime he had no such status.

42 Michael J. Roberts, "Venantius Fortunatus's Life of Saint Martin," *Traditio* 57 (2002): 129–87 at 177.

less both poem and mosaic decoration came out of a cultural milieu in which the associations between court and heaven were in common use.⁴³

Politics: Franks, Ostrogoths, Byzantines, and Arianism

The spread of the cult of Martin into Italy, then, that began in the late 5th century, during the tolerant reign of Theodoric, was not the cult of an anti-Arian fanatic, but of an ascetic bishop. If by the mid-6th century he was being credited in Italy with victories against Arians, this may be ascribed to his association with Clovis and the Battle of Vouillé. The choice of Martin as the patron of the church adjacent to Ravenna's palace, now inhabited by the Byzantine administration, reflects political considerations in which the Battle of Vouillé stood for Theodoric's diplomatic failures and for the alliance of Franks and Byzantines against Arian enemies.

Before Vouillé, Theodoric had arranged marriage alliances between his family and the rulers of many of the successor kingdoms in western Europe, and in his diplomatic correspondence he portrayed himself as their leader. In 507 his daughter Theodegotha was married to King Alaric II of the Visigoths, and Theodoric himself was married to Audofleda the sister of Clovis. In the letters sent from Theodoric to Alaric, Gundobad of Burgundy, Clovis, and other rulers in the years leading up to the Battle of Vouillé, Theodoric attempted to mediate between all parties.⁴⁴ When Clovis attacked Alaric, the latter appealed for help to Theodoric, but the Ostrogothic army came too late to help the Visigoths at Vouillé.⁴⁵ The victory of Clovis at Vouillé was thus a defeat for Theodoric and his diplomatic initiatives, and subsequent activity by all parties, including the Byzantines, demonstrates that it was a complex and tense diplomatic situation.⁴⁶ The Byzantines supported Clovis against Theodoric and the Ostrogoths, whether to be pro-Frankish or anti-Ostrogothic is not clear, although relations between Theodoric and Anastasius were patched up in the following year. Theodoric supported his young grandson Amalaric as king of the Visigoths in Spain and southern Gaul, in opposition to Amalaric's illegitimate brother Gesalic, who was in turn supported by the Vandals.

Theodoric's grand diplomatic web unraveled after Vouillé, and new alignments were formed, in which the Ostrogoths were diametrically opposed

43 For other examples, see Michael J. Roberts, *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca, 1989).

44 Cass. *Variae* 2.41, 3.1–4, ed. Theodor Mommsen, MGH AA 12 (Berlin, 1894), 73, 78–81.

45 Procop. *BG* 1.12.34, 37, ed. Jakob Haury and Gerhard Wirth (Leipzig, 1962).

46 See J. J. Arnold, "Theodoric, the Goths, and the Restoration of the Roman Empire" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2008), 239–50.

to the Franks. This is how Procopius portrays the battle and its consequences in his *De Bello Gothico*, written in the 540s and early 550s and, presumably, reflecting attitudes in Italy in the 530s.⁴⁷ After the death of Theodoric; the Franks were heavily involved in the Gothic war in Italy, initially on the side of the Byzantines, but in the latter phases on the side of the Ostrogoths, and sometimes on their own.⁴⁸ Upon the final defeat of the Ostrogoths in 552 the Franks continued to maintain diplomatic relations with Byzantium, while at the same time consolidating their control over parts of northern Italy. But soon afterward the Lombards began making their presence felt, and the Byzantines and the Franks were thrown back upon one another in the face of this common threat.⁴⁹

It is not clear how much of an issue Arianism was in all of these political realignments.⁵⁰ Gregory of Tours states that Clovis attacked the Visigoths because they were Arian, but he was writing decades after the event. Theodoric does not seem to have made confession or religion a political issue; his marriage alliances were forged with Arian, Nicene, and even non-Christian kings. The Arian Vandals were the only group that pursued an aggressively anti-Nicene policy, and it seems to have been the Byzantine reconquest of the west, which began with the Vandal kingdom and moved to Italy, that catalyzed anti-Arianism as a political rationale.⁵¹ Procopius tells us that in 535 Justinian wrote to the leaders of the Franks and asked for their alliance against the Goths, on both political and anti-Arian grounds: "For this reason we have been compelled to take the field against them, and it is proper that you should join with us in waging this war, which is rendered yours as well as ours not only by the orthodox faith, which rejects the opinion of the Arians, but also by the enmity we both feel toward the Goths."⁵² By the 530s, therefore, Arianism was a religious-political factor in dealings with the kingdoms of western Europe.

Thus in the later 560s, the time at which a choice of dedication for Theodoric's church was being made, the Byzantines were faced with the increasing threat of yet another non-Nicene group of barbarians, the

47 Procop. *BG* 1.12.33–40.

48 Herwig Wolfram, *History of the Goths* (Berkeley, 1988), 347 ff.

49 See Walter Pohl, "The Empire and the Lombards: Treaties and Negotiations in the Sixth Century," in *Kingdoms of the Empire: The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. W. Pohl (Leiden, 1997), 75–133.

50 See, for what follows, Knut Schäferdiek, "L'arianisme germanique et ses conséquences," in *Clovis: histoire et mémoire: Le baptême de Clovis, l'événement*, ed. Michel Rouche (Paris, 1997), 1.185–97, esp. at 193–94 and Ian Wood's article in this volume.

51 On Justin and Justinian's anti-Arian policies and their effect on Theodoric, see recently Patrick Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489–554* (Cambridge, 1997), 195–235, 261.

52 Procop. *BG* 1.5.

Lombards,⁵³ with an unreliable Nicene ally, the Franks, over the border. It was in 563–65 that the Frankish Clotsinda had been married to the Lombard king Alboin, the event that prompted Nicetius of Trier's letter cited above. The political situation must have been precarious, and, as seen in Nicetius's letter, there was a fear that Arians would dominate the Lombard side. The dedication of the palace church of the Byzantine exarch to a Frankish saint may have been a reaction to this situation, a recognition of the orthodoxy of the Franks and thus their potential as allies, especially against the Lombards, and more generally a recognition of Martin as an effective patron for an orthodox army facing Arians and other nonorthodox enemies. The Franks and Saint Martin had defeated the Visigoths and Theodoric, and this church served to commemorate that victory in Ravenna. Thus the Battle of Vouillé played an important role both in the development of the cult of Saint Martin and in the way that religious alignments could be deployed to serve complex political circumstances.

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53 Fanning, "Lombard Arianism Reconsidered," esp. at 251–52, makes the argument that the Lombard leaders were rather shallowly orthodox through the 540's and then reverted to paganism, but that by 567 there were Arian Gepids and Ostrogoths among the Lombard population, and by the 590s Gregory I was describing Arian Lombards.

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The Material Remains

Has Anyone Seen the Barbarians? Remarks on the Missing Archeology of the Visigoths in Gaul

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As a consequence of the Visigothic defeat at Vouillé, the Visigothic kingdom came to an end, and, except for a small strip in Septimania, the future history of the Visigoths would be written in Spain. But after nearly a century of rule in southwestern Gaul, one might well wonder at what the Visigothic legacy was, and in particular, what kind of mark they left in the material culture. This question arose in 1985, at the first major international Visigothic conference in France. The historian Michel Rouche asked rhetorically what traces the Visigoths had left in Aquitaine and then answered: “Il ne faut pas hésiter à répondre: quasiment rien!”¹ Likewise, Edward James, author of the only overview of the archeology of southwestern Gaul, has remarked that, without the written sources to tell us that they had been there, one could never divine their presence from the archeological record.² The story of scholarly efforts to apprehend the Visigothic presence in Aquitaine by looking for them in material culture is an instructive one, and it is far from over, as a look at new finds and theories that have emerged since 1985 will show.

The Rise and Fall of the Cultural-Historical Hypothesis (1892–1985)

The idea that such a thing as “Visigothic archeology” ought to exist derives from the assumptions that underlie what the historian of archeology Bruce Trigger calls “cultural-historical” archeology, an approach widespread in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It assumes that ancient peoples had characteristic

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- 1 Michel Rouche, “Visigoths et Francs en Aquitaine: Etat de la question et perspectives,” in *Gallo-Romains, Visigoths et Francs en Aquitaine, Septimanie et Espagne: Actes des VIIe Journées internationales d'Archéologie mérovingienne, Toulouse 1985*, ed. P. Périn (Rouen, 1991), 143–48 at 143.
 - 2 Edward James, “Les problèmes archéologiques du Sud-Ouest wisigothique et franc,” in *Gallo-Romains, Visigoths et Francs*, ed. P. Périn, 149–53 at 149.

material cultures; a corollary, particularly stressed by the influential Gustav Kossinna, is that this was reflected in grave-goods.³

The assumption was convenient, for almost all the archeological vestiges of the various barbarian peoples recovered before rather late in the 20th century came from cemeteries. In France (as well as Belgium and Rhenish Germany) this paradigm first developed in regard to the Franks around the middle of the 19th century, and the Burgundians were soon added.⁴ In 1892 Camille Barrière-Flavy brought the Visigoths to the table.⁵ He catalogued 114 sites of “sépultures barbares” in the 21 modern *départements* that correspond roughly to the maximum extent of the Visigothic kingdom before the Battle of Vouillé and devoted the second chapter of his text to specious arguments holding that these can be neither Merovingian nor Frank, and therefore must be Visigothic.⁶ The artifacts were copiously illustrated with 35 engraved plates and many line drawings (fig. 1). Although these included grey and orange pottery, some of it with stamped decoration, identified as Visigothic, most of the material consisted of costume accessories, such as plate-buckles with a rectangular plate, sporting chip-carved decor, and eagle fibulae. Citing recent publications by the Baron de Baye and other scholars, Barrière-Flavy was able to point to parallels and prototypes for these objects from southern Russia and Crimea, where the Gothic tribes were known to have been living before their westward migrations, parallels that lent some plausibility to his argument that the Goths had arrived in Aquitaine wearing their traditional national costume.⁷ About the time that his views were meeting with general acceptance (despite the prescient objections of A.-F. Lièvre),⁸ the first proper excavation of an important cemetery, Tabariaine (Ariège) yielded 80 graves with 24 buckles and some other personal items.⁹ In 1935–36 and again in 1946–48 Raymond Lantier excavated 208 graves at the site of Estagel (Pyrenées-Orientales) and published them promptly and fairly completely (albeit in a series of articles rather than a coherent monograph).¹⁰

3 Bruce Trigger, *A History of Archaeological Thought* (Cambridge, 1989), 163–67.

4 Patrick Périn, *La datation des tombes mérovingiennes: Historique-Méthodes-Applications* (Geneva, 1980), 28–38.

5 Camille Barrière-Flavy, *Etude sur les sépultures barbares du Midi et de l'Ouest de la France: Industrie wisigothique* (Toulouse, 1892).

6 Barrière-Flavy, *Sépultures*, 15–27. See Périn's critique in *Datation*, 34–36.

7 Barrière-Flavy, *Sépultures*, 22–24.

8 Auguste-François Lièvre, *Les sépultures mérovingiennes et l'art barbare dans l'ouest de la France* (Poitiers, 1894).

9 Robert Roger, “Cimetière barbare de Tabariaine, commune de Teilhet, Ariège,” *Bull. Archéol.* (1908): 313–27.

10 Raymond Lantier, “Le cimetière wisigothique d'Estagel: fouilles de 1935 et 1936,” *Gallia* 1 (1943): 158–88; idem, “Le cimetière wisigothique d'Estagel: fouilles en 1946, 1947 et 1948,” *Gallia* 7 (1949): 55–80; idem, “Nouvelles fouilles dans le cimetière

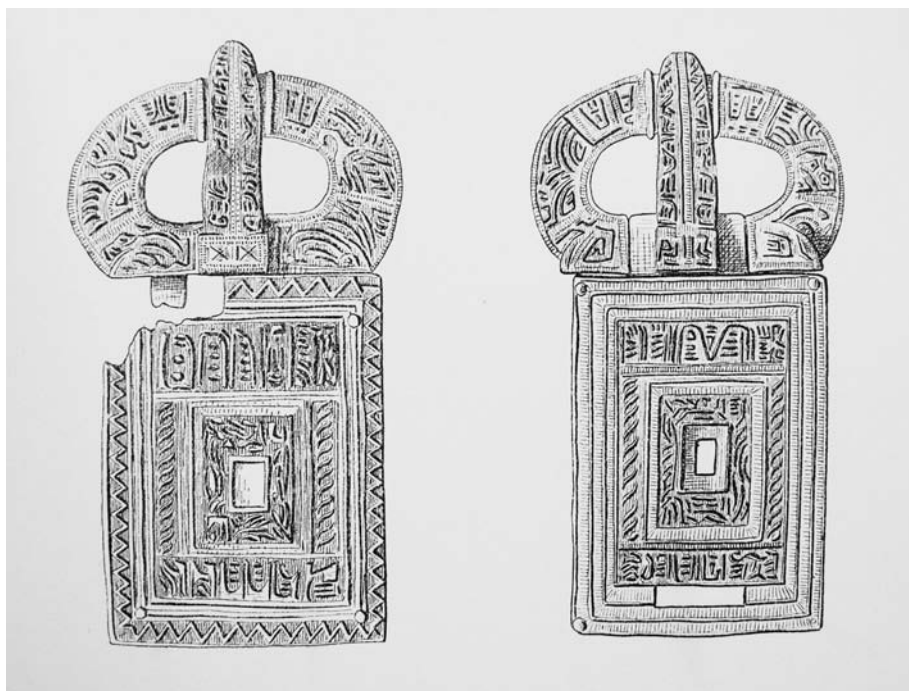


Fig. 1: Plate-buckles considered Visigothic by Barrière-Flavy, from the Fiac, Tarn, and Toulouse region. Source: Camille Barrière-Flavy, *Etude sur les sépultures barbares du Midi et de l'Ouest de la France. Industrie wisigothique* (Toulouse, 1892), pl. 25.

For Lantier, around 1950, there was no question but that these were Visigothic graves with Visigothic material culture.

By this time, however, challenges to the viability of the cultural-historical hypothesis as regards the Visigoths in Gaul had arisen. In 1947 the Swedish archeologist Nils Aberg devoted a chapter to Aquitanian belt-buckles in his monumental study *The Orient and the Occident in the Art of the Seventh Century*. Aberg showed that these were derived formally from Frankish prototypes (in other words, from prototypes in northern Gaul, which by the 7th century had become Francia) and that in regard to decoration they draw mostly on the native Mediterranean traditions of southern Gaul.¹¹ The style of these buckles, he writes, “is certainly Roman in character” and “does not suggest any direct connection with Germanic quarters”;¹² their distribution within both Aquitaine (conquered by the Franks after 507) and Septimania (Visigothic until the Arabs

wisigothique d’Estagel,” *CRAI* (1947): 226–35; idem, “Fouilles dans le cimetière wisigothique d’Estagel,” *CRAI* (1948): 154–63.

11 Nils Aberg, *The Orient and the Occident in the Art of the Seventh Century* (Stockholm, 1947), 340–64.

12 Ibid., 40.

takeover) proved, for Aberg, that they derived from a native population that had “on the whole preserved its Gallo-Roman personality.”¹³

In 1950 Edouard Salin was still under the spell of the cultural-historical hypothesis when he set out, in the first volume of his monumental synthesis *La civilisation mérovingienne*, to define the archeological features of the barbarian peoples in Gaul, but he recognized that the Visigoths presented problems.¹⁴ There are almost no weapons in their graves, he noted, citing Barrière-Flavy’s catalogue, the recent Estagel excavations, and data from Visigothic graves in Spain which had become available after the publications of Hans Zeiss in the 1930s.¹⁵ Pottery was quite rare in graves in Visigothic regions, and he admitted (unlike Lantier, who was still speaking of “Visigothic” pottery at this time) that the regional ceramics were in the Roman rather than the Germanic tradition.¹⁶ Over the next generation, ceramic studies by J. and Y. Rigoir, among others, would clearly establish that the Late Antique stamped wares found throughout southern Gaul had nothing to do with the Visigoths (except as consumers); they were a continuation of Roman productions, now called *dérivées-de-sigillées*.¹⁷ This left costume—personal ornament. Here Salin agreed with Barrière-Flavy that the rectangular plate-buckle was characteristically Visigothic, distinguishing an earlier type, with its cloisonné decor, from the chip-carved bronze type (fig. 2). He also accepted the *fibula ansée*, with a semicircular head (also called a radiate bow-brooch), noting its parallels in Spain.¹⁸ He acknowledged, however, that Barrière-Flavy had falsely attributed to the Visigoths many plate-buckles that came into use long after their expulsion from Aquitaine and, like Aberg, concluded that many of the dressed-burial graves must be those of Gallo-Romans, though he also pointed to cemeteries showing Frankish influence in Charente and elsewhere, anticipating in this regard later scholars.¹⁹

With the publication in 1977 of his Oxford thesis, *The Merovingian Archaeology of Southwest Gaul* (a title that carefully avoids mentioning either Visigoths or Aquitaine), Edward James masterfully demolished the cultural-

13 Ibid., 46.

14 Edouard Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne*, vol. 1: *Les idées et les faits* (Paris, 1950), 243–49; pl. ix; 387–400.

15 Salin, *CM* 1.243–44; Hans Zeiss, *Die Grabfunde aus dem spanischen Westgothenreich* (Berlin/Leipzig, 1934).

16 Salin, *CM* 1.249.

17 Jacqueline Rigoir, “Les sigillées paléochrétiennes grises et orangées,” *Gallia* 26 (1968): 177–244; Jacqueline Rigoir and Yves Rigoir, “Les dérivées-de-sigillées paléochrétiennes,” in *L’oppidum de Saint-Blaise du V au VIIe siècle*, ed. G. Démain d’Archimbaud, *Documents d’archéologie française* 45 (Paris, 1994), 136–60.

18 Salin, *CM* 1.243–49.

19 Salin, *CM* 1.387–92.

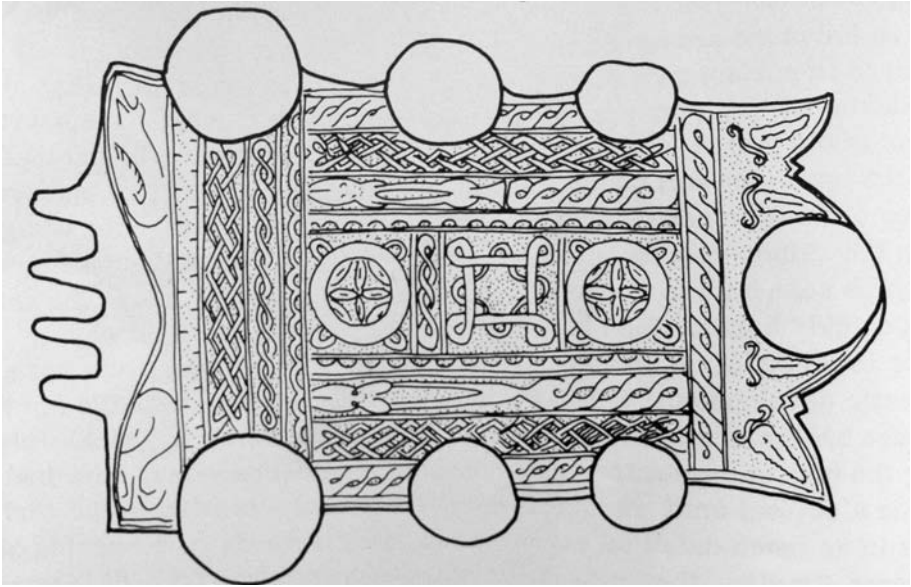


Fig. 2: Salin's typical Visigothic ornament. Source: drawn by Edward James, used with permission.

historical hypothesis as applied to the Visigoths of the kingdom of Toulouse.²⁰ What could reasonably be called Visigothic ornament were objects that turned up in graves in Spain—such as radiate bow brooches and the rectangular cloisonné buckles—but their chronology starts in the mid-6th century, after the expulsion of the Visigoths from Gaul. They turn up in southwest France only in Septimania, the region that remained under Visigothic control; north of that one finds the Aquitanian buckles (James agrees with Aberg here), as well as others that are Frankish or show Frankish influence.²¹ He singled out Herpes, in Charente-Maritime, as “eccentric” in southwest Gaul not only for the variety and wealth of ornament deriving from dressed burial, but for an abundance of weaponry in graves, the very trait which Salin had noted as most *un*-Visigothic. Indeed, he advances as possibly valid a suggestion first made by E. T. Leeds in 1936 that the people buried at Herpes were likely to be a Frankish military

20 Edward James, *The Merovingian Archaeology of Southwest Gaul*, BAR Supplementary Series 25 (Oxford, 1977). See in particular vol. 1, chap. 5, “The Burials” (161–86), where he notes quite unequivocally: “Burial customs are not accurate ethnic indicators, nor are they trustworthy indicators of men’s religious beliefs” (164).

21 *Ibid.*, chap. 3: “The Aquitanian Buckles” (97–151); fig. 47 (244) clearly shows the cluster of “Visigothic” buckles within (or close to) Septimania.

colony settled in the wake of Clovis's victory in 507.²² This hypothesis has now been generally accepted.²³

Tabariane must also be struck from the roster of Visigothic cemeteries. Not only, as Salin had already noted, is its lyre-shaped plate-buckle typical not of Spain but of Aquitaine (and dates to the 7th century), but its funerary practices overall also are eccentric in their regional context, as at Herpes; indeed, James guessed that it was the burial place of an Aquitanian military colony guarding the frontier against Visigothic Septimania just down the road.²⁴ It is in Septimania that we find Estagel, which Salin and James agree does have a strongly Visigothic character—both for the grave goods it does yield (rectangular plate-buckles and fibula pairs; many parallels in Spain) and those that it does not (absence of weapons, absence of any grave goods in many tombs, notably of children). As James notes, it is not comparable to other cemeteries in the southwest, except in Septimania. However, here, as in Spain, Visigothic grave assemblages do not date as far back as the days of the Toulouse kingdom; they date to the later 6th and 7th centuries.²⁵ It was in the content of reviewing the archeological problems of southwest Gaul for the 1985 AFAM meeting in Toulouse, that James remarked how, if we did not know from written sources that the Visigoths had ruled from Toulouse for almost a century, we would never guess it from the archeology. No archeological vestige characteristically “Visigothic” dating to that period had been found there, he said bluntly.²⁶ In 1977 he had allowed one vestige: a rectangular plate-buckle with an eagle-head ornament found on the site of a villa at Valentine (Haute-Garonne), held to resemble 5th-century Gothic buckles from Crimea. But now that Hungarian scholars see this as resembling 6th-century Gepid buckles, it can no longer be counted as unquestionably Visigothic.²⁷

Two Decades On: The Visigoths in the Brave New (Archeological) World (1985–)

Even as Edward James was speaking, a new publication showed he had been too categorical. The excavation of a late Roman villa, later the site of a Merovingian cemetery, at Beaucaire-sur-Baïse (Gers) turned up a type of comb, both Gothic

22 Ibid., 166–68.

23 Patrick Périn and Laure-Charlotte Feffer, *Les Francs* (Paris, 1987), 201.

24 James, *Southwest Gaul*, 169–70; Salin, *CM* 1.393–95.

25 James, *Southwest Gaul*, 170–71; Salin, *CM* 1.397–400.

26 James, *Les problèmes*, 149.

27 Ibid.

and 5th century in date.²⁸ It is commonly found in graves of the Černiakhov culture in central and eastern Europe, and it is precisely the increasing accessibility, since the 1980s, of archeological data from the east that has had a major influence in reshaping our understanding not only of the Visigoths, but also of how better to integrate archeology into our understanding of the late antique world (fig. 3). The work of Kazanski has been particularly valuable in this regard. His contribution to the 1985 colloquium showed that the appearance of Černiakhov-style material in the Carpathian basin, north of the Danube, in the later 4th and early 5th century correlated with the presence of Goths coming in as subject allies of the Huns.²⁹ He also saw the disappearance of Černiakhov culture in this region in the mid-5th century as correlating with the breakup of the Hunnish Empire, but not before an elite mode of dress had developed that was destined to live on.³⁰

Artifacts such as the large radiate fibulae and the square plate-buckles with bright cloisonné decoration were thus not specifically Visigothic, but Danubian features adopted by Gothic, as by other, members of the barbarian military elites and known by chieftain's tombs of the later 5th century. Jaroslav Terjal discussed this process in more precise detail at an AFAM colloquium held at Saint-Germain-en-Laye in 1997.³¹ This and other recent studies suggest that during the middle and latter part of the 5th century a style of elite personal display that developed in the middle Danube spread (fig. 4)—along with the funerary custom of taking the goods into the grave—westward, where it was adopted by certain barbarian leaders such as the Frank Childeric.³² If this reading of the archeological evidence is correct, it means that the assumptions underlying the

28 Mary Larrieu, Bernard Marty, Patrick Périn, and Eric Crubézy, *La nécropole mérovingienne de la Turraque, Beaucaire-sur-Baise (Gers)* (Sorèze, 1985), annexe 1: "Le peigne en os" (257–69).

29 Michel Kazanski, "Contribution à l'étude des migrations des Goths à la fin du IV et au Ve siècle: le témoignage de l'archéologie," in *Gallo-Romains, Wisigoths et Francs*, 11–25.

30 Ibid., 14.

31 Jaroslav Terjal, "Les fédérés de l'Empire et des formations des royaumes barbares dans la région du Danube moyen à la lumière des données archéologiques," in *Des Royaumes barbares au Regnum Francorum: L'Occident à l'époque de Childéric et de Clovis (vers 450–vers 530)*, ed. F. Vallet, M. Kazanski, and P. Périn, Actes des XVIIIes Journées Internationales d'Archéologie Mérovingienne (Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée des Antiquités Nationales, 23–24 avril 1997) = *Antiquités Nationales* 29 (1998): 137–66.

32 Terjal, "Les fédérés" 160–62; Michel Kazanski, "La diffusion de la mode danubienne en Gaule (fin du IV–début du VI siècle): essai d'interprétation historique," *Antiquités Nationales* 21 (1990): 59–73; Michel Kazanski and Patrick Périn, "Les barbares 'orientaux' dans l'armée romaine en Gaule," in *Des Royaumes barbares au Regnum Francorum: L'Occident à l'époque de Childéric et de Clovis (vers 450–vers 530)*, ed. F. Vallet, M. Kazanski, and P. Périn, Actes des XVIIIes Journées Internationales d'Archéologie Mérovingienne (Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée des Antiquités Nationales, 23–24 avril 1997) = *Antiquités Nationales* 29 (1998): 201–17.

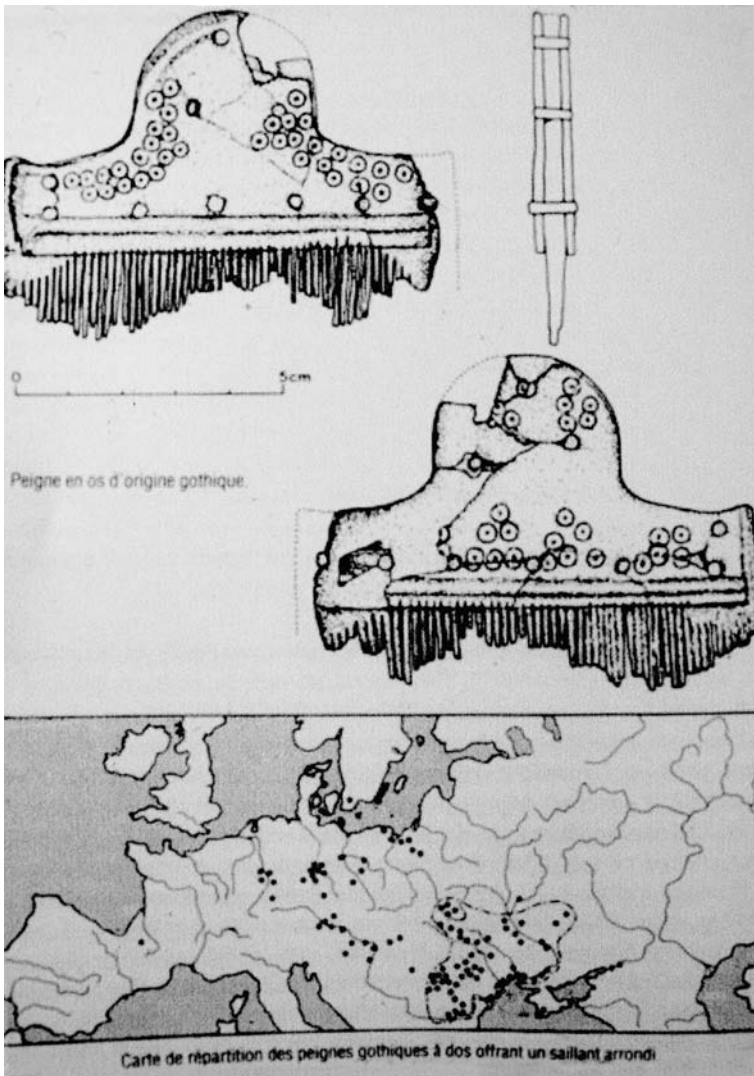


Fig. 3: Distribution of Thomas type III combs of the Černiakhov culture, including the example found at Beaucaire-sur-Baise. Source: Patrick Périn and Laure-Charlotte Feffer, *Les Francs: A la conquête de la Gaule* (Paris, 1987), 100. Used with permission.

old cultural-historical hypothesis were wrong in one fundamental regard. Barbarian peoples did not bring a distinctive funerary culture with them into the Roman Empire: rather, in the process of getting there and of interacting with Romans and other barbarians, they developed one, or even several.

The irony, where the Visigoths are concerned, is that although they passed through Pannonia in the early 5th century and shared in new styles of dress,

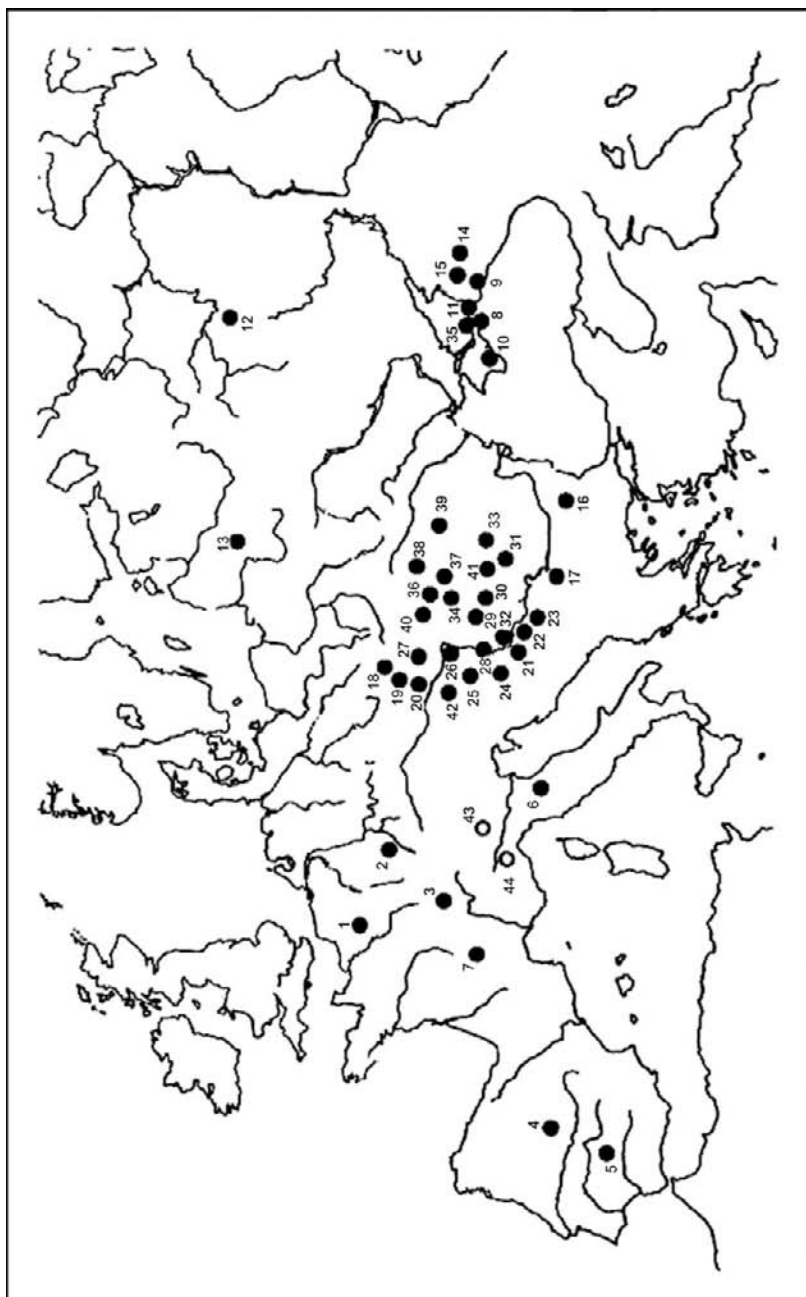


Fig. 4: Distribution of Danubian fibulae in 5th- and early-6th-century graves (after Völker Bierbrauer). Source: *Des Royaumes barbares au Regnum Francorum: L'Occident à l'époque de Childéric et de Clovis (vers 450-vers 530)*, ed. F. Vallet, M. Kazanski, and P. Périn, Actes des XVIIIes Journées Internationales d'Archéologie Mérovingienne (Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée des Antiquités Nationales, 23-24 avril 1997) = *Antiquités Nationales* 29 (1998).

they did not adopt the funerary custom of lavish display that spread, as we have seen, somewhat later.³³ By that time they had become established in Aquitaine, where, as James showed, their burials cannot be distinguished from any others datable to the period of their residence there. Although that may not be quite true. As Michel Rouche pointed out, a man buried in a later-5th-century sarcophagus in Bourges was armed with a lance bearing the inscription *PATRICIVZ REGIVS*³⁴ (fig. 5). It is at least plausible to assume that a high ranking military official in Bourges would have been, at that time, a Goth. But if so, his burial in a sarcophagus, that most characteristic Roman mode of elite funerary display, underlines the larger point that he has chosen to express in burial a multicultural, rather than a strictly Visigothic, identity. This example lends some support to James's rather heretical (but most logical) suggestion that a likely marker of elite Visigoths in the kingdom of Toulouse might well be the highly decorated sarcophagi of the Aquitaine school.³⁵ The larger point would be that the Visigoths, by so many accounts, sought to integrate into the Roman Empire, and we should not be surprised that their material culture looks Roman. The spectacular discovery, in the late 1980s, of what are probably the remains of the Visigothic royal palace in Toulouse underscore this: what else should this resemble but an elite Late Antique administrative building?³⁶

There is, however, a further irony. In the 1997 Saint-Germain colloquium Völker Bierbrauer pointed out more than 40 typical female Visigothic graves in Gaul, but none of them in Aquitaine. They are in Francia, scattered throughout typical Frankish cemeteries in the Merovingian heartland.³⁷ Tomb 140 from Nouvion-en-Ponthieu in Picardy, for example, offers a woman whose personal ornament includes two pair of *fibulae*: one of them, an S-shaped pair in gilded silver, worn on the upper chest, would raise no eyebrows in a Frankish burial, but the *fibula ansée* pair worn at the waist, with a semicircular head, provides the

33 Patrick Périn, "L'armée de Vidimir et la question des dépôts funéraires chez les Wisigoths en Gaule et en Espagne (Ve–VIe siècles), in *L'armée romaine et les barbares*, ed. ed. F. Vallet and M. Kazanski, Actes du Colloque internationale du Musée des Antiquités nationales (Saint-Germain-en-Laye 1990) (Condé-sur-Noiroit, 1993), 411–23.

34 Rouche, "Wisigoths et francs," 146. A description of this tomb, with a photograph of the lance, can be found in *A l'aube de la France, la Gaule de Constantin à Childéric: Catalogue de l'exposition* (Paris, 1981), notice 223, 141–42.

35 James, "Les problèmes," 151–52. Note how he qualifies his suggestion: the sarcophagi were made for the elite, including the Visigoths along with Roman senators and bishops.

36 Jean-Paul Demoule, ed., *La France archéologique: Vingt ans d'aménagements et de découvertes* (Paris, 2004), 167.

37 Völker Bierbrauer, "Les Wisigoths dans le royaume franc," in *Des Royaumes barbares au Regnum Francorum: L'Occident à l'époque de Childéric et de Clovis (vers 450–vers 530)*, ed. F. Vallet, M. Kazanski, and P. Périn, Actes des XVIIIes Journées Internationales d'Archéologie Mérovingienne (Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée des Antiquités Nationales, 23–24 avril 1997) = *Antiquités Nationales* 29 (1998): 167–200.

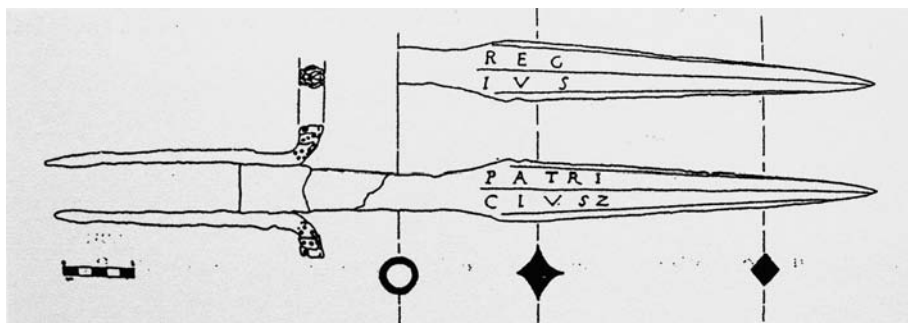


Fig. 5: Inscribed lance head from Bourges, with legends *Regius* and *Patricius*; late 5th century. Source: Pierre Bailly, "A propos d'une mention de 'patrice' dans une sépulture du Ve siècle à Bourges," *Etudes creusoises* 5 (1984): 39–43 at 40.

"Gothic" clue.³⁸ This type turns up often in Visigothic Spain: Bierbrauer provided a number of examples from Duraton and other cemeteries.³⁹ Another interesting example comes from tomb 756 at Vicq (fig. 6a–b), a site southwest of Paris: not only does it offer two pairs of fibulae (a silver aviform pair this time, as well as a rather larger pair of "Visigothic" radial-headed *fibula ansée*), but also sports the square plate-buckle with a cloisonné decor recognized as Gothic ever since Barrière-Flavy.⁴⁰

Pointing to close parallels in Spanish cemeteries such as Duraton and arguing for a chronology covering the very end of the 5th century and the first quarter of the 6th, Bierbrauer proposed that these graves were the archeological survival of an unrecorded historical event: a group of Visigoths who had left their *patria* (Spain/Septimania) at the time that Clovis was expanding and consolidating his power and settled among the Franks.⁴¹ We know them only by these female graves, for male burial custom was not then ethnically marked, while female was. This latter point deserves underlining: a number of recent studies of burial practice and culture among the barbarian peoples, notably Germanic, of this era, stress that female costume can be taken as a conservative expression of ethnic distinction.⁴² It is not only the durable costume artifacts

38 Ibid., 183 (pl. 4); no. 28 in his catalogue (the grave is misnumbered there, 14 instead of 140).

39 Ibid., 184–85 (pls. 5–6).

40 Ibid., 180 (pl. 1). Compare this assemblage with Duraton, tomb 573, 193 (pl. 14).

41 Ibid., 174–75; he stresses that archeology here provides evidence of a Visigothic group which settled in the core Frankish area at a time of steady hostility between the expanding Frankish power of Clovis and the Gothic kingdom of Toulouse. He stresses that the written sources, which he terms "confused," offer no hint of this hypothesized migration and settlement.

42 Hypothesis proposed in Joachim Werner, "Zur Verbreitung frömmittelalterliche Metalarbeiten (Werkstatt-Wanderhandwerk-Handel-Familienverbindung)," *Early Medieval*

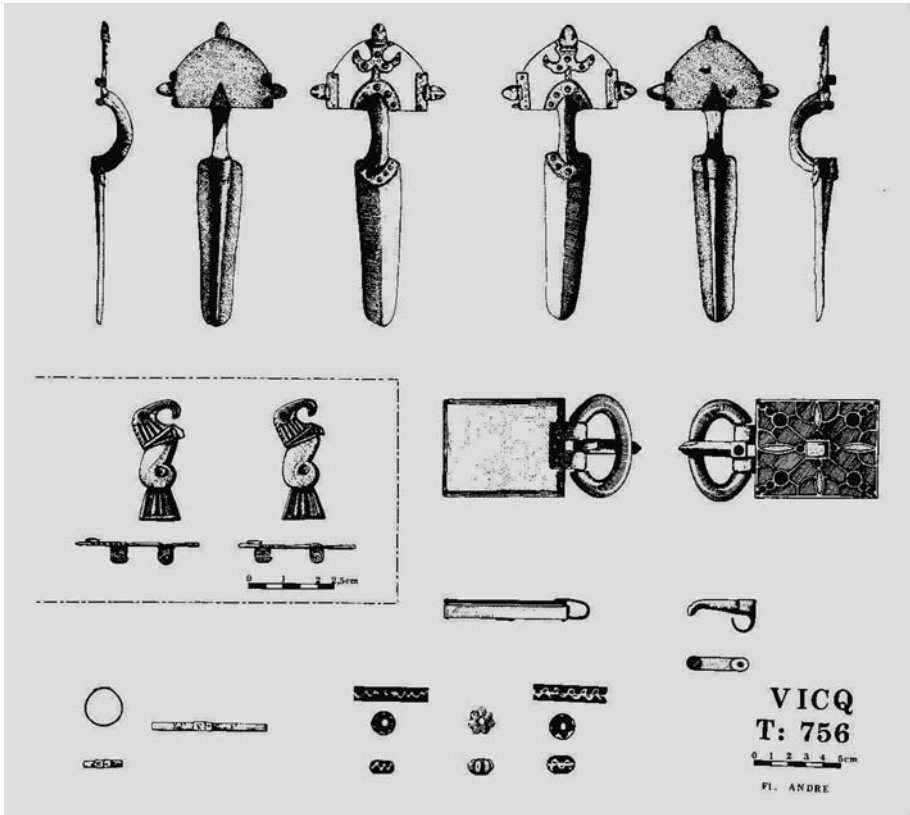


Fig. 6a–b: Grave group from Vicq (Yvelines), tomb 756, with graph of evolution of Danubian Pressblechfibula. The typochronology of the Danubian *Pressblechfibeln* (J. Terjal) would situate the Vicq pair around 500 or shortly thereafter. Source: Michel Kazanski and Patrick Périn, “Les barbares ‘orientaux’ dans l’armée romaine en Gaule,” in *Des Royaumes barbares au Regnum Francorum: L’Occident à l’époque de Childéric et de Clovis (vers 450–vers 530)*, ed. F. Vallet, M. Kazanski, and P. Périn, Actes des XVIIIes Journées Internationales d’Archéologie Mérovingienne (Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée des Antiquités Nationales, 23–24 avril 1997) = *Antiquités Nationales* 29 (1998): 201–17, fig. 6 (grave 756), fig. 10 (chart).

themselves that signify, but how they were worn, as their disposition in the grave tells us. Visigothic women wore their fibulae by pairs up on the shoulder⁴³ (fig. 7).

But were they indeed Visigothic women? Such is the riposte made by a team of Russo-French scholars to Bierbrauer’s hypothesis. Since the 1990s this group

Studies 1 (Antikvarst Arkiv 38) (1970): 65–81. Further development: Max Martin, “Tradition und Wandel der fibelgeschmückten frühmittelalterlichen Frauentracht,” *Jahrbuch RGZM* 38 (1995): 661–73.

⁴³ Périn and Kazanski, “Identity.”

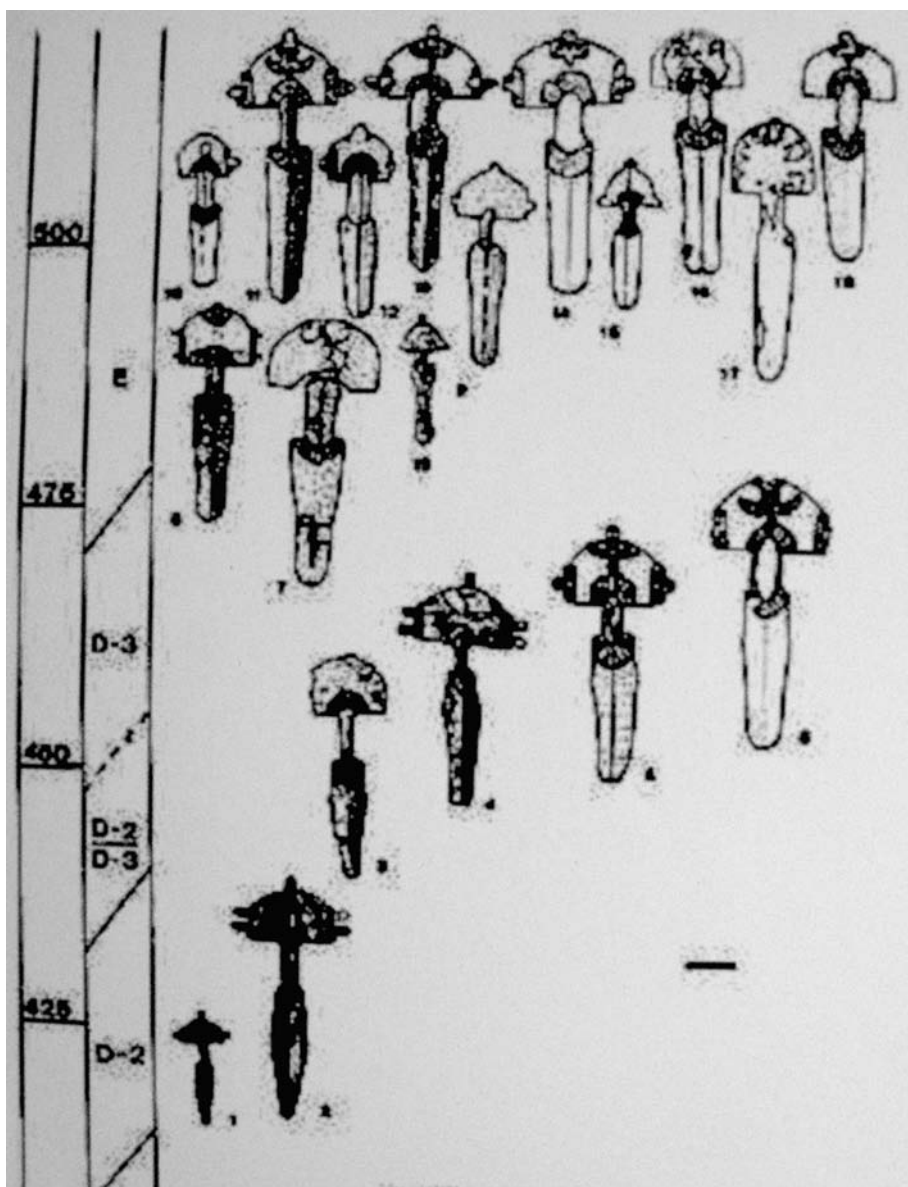


Fig. 6 (continued)

(F. Vallet, P. Périn, M. Kazanski, A. Mastykova), centered on the *Musée d'Archéologie nationale* (MAN), has been studying the larger problem of barbarians within the late Roman military as well as beyond the frontiers. In a



Fig. 7: Reconstruction of a Visigothic woman with fibulae on the shoulder. Source: Volker Bierbrauer, "Les Wisigoths dans le royaume franc." Source: *Des Royaumes barbares au Regnum Francorum: L'Occident à l'époque de Childéric et de Clovis (vers 450–vers 530)*, ed. F. Vallet, M. Kazanski, and P. Périn, Actes des XVIIIes Journées Internationales d'Archéologie Mérovingienne (Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Musée des Antiquités Nationales, 23–24 avril 1997) = *Antiquités Nationales* 29 (1998): 167–200, fig. 1.

paper given in the same 1997 colloquium⁴⁴ and in a recent, not-yet-published paper⁴⁵ they criticize the Bierbrauer hypothesis, partly on chronological grounds. Bierbrauer dated all the graves in his group to after ca. 480; but the

⁴⁴ Kazanski and Périn, "Les barbares 'orientaux' dans l'armée romaine en Gaule." Kazanski, M., A. Mastikova, and P. Périn, "Die Archäologie der Westgoten in Nordgallien. Zum Stand der Forschung," in *Zwischen Spätantike und Mittelalter (Actes du Colloque Gräber, Siedlungen und Identitäten des 4. Bis 7. Jahrhunderts im Westen, Freiburg in Br. 2005)*. (Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 149–92.

MAN team thinks that some of them are older. Bierbrauer thought the prototypes came from the Visigothic *patria*, where the dressed burial custom was already in effect—for example at Duraton, in Spain—and that the examples in Francia derived from these. The MAN group counters that this type of radial-headed *fibula ansée* with aviform appliqués found in Gaul north of the Loire (e.g., from tomb 359 at Saint-Martin-de-Fontenay in Normandy or tomb 756 at Vicq southwest of Paris) is more archaic than those from Duraton, or any Spanish example, and thus that the influence must go the other way.⁴⁶ Bierbrauer's "Visigothic" group in northern Gaul should instead be rebaptized the "Eastern German Military Elite and Wannabe" group.

The argument that seems most persuasive is that the female dress mode fossilized in these graves derives from imitation of the elite burials of the Smolin horizon in the Danube (about the middle third of the 5th century). In Périn's words, they "correspond en fait à une réplique 'populaire' du costume prestigieux danubien."⁴⁷ He further suggests how the transition may have occurred. In the years between the checking of Attila's invasion of Gaul (451) and Clovis's defeat of Syagrius (486), the vigorous Roman army in northern Gaul was reinforced by contingents of German warriors from the east, like mercenaries except that they came with their wives and families. Notably, there were the forces led by the Ostrogothic prince Vidimir, who came to Gaul after a detour in Italy in 472–74.⁴⁸ Their women wore the rectangular plate-buckle with cloisonné decoration and, on the shoulders, a pair of silver-plated fibulae ansées with a long foot, a type that was to go out of fashion in the Danube by 480 but to survive more than a generation longer in north Gaul, in the kind of vestimentary conservatism typical of self-conscious ethnic groups eager to preserve their sense of distinction in a new, heterogeneous environment.⁴⁹ Many of the soldiers, and their wives, were no doubt Goths, like Prince Vidimir of the prestigious Amal lineage. But, as the historical sources confirm, in the western "Roman" armies of the time—notably those of Majorian and Odovacar—there also were Huns, Alans, Skirians, Herules, and Rugians. Thus, the graves where

46 Ibid. Bierbrauer, in his 1997 paper "Les Wisigoths," 174–75, had rejected the hypothesis that the women buried in northern Gaul wearing this type of fibula could have been eastern Germans on chronological/typological grounds deriving from the assumption that the Gallic examples derive from the Spanish, the argument challenged by Kazanski and Périn in this paper.

47 Ibid. I thank the authors for permission to quote from this paper.

48 Périn, "L'armée de Vidimir."

49 In addition to the studies cited in n 42, this topic is treated with reference particularly to Gaul in a paper to appear in a volume stemming from the 2005 meeting of the Society for Late Antiquity held in Urbana-Champaign: Patrick Périn and Michel Kazanski, "Identity and Ethnicity in the Era of Migrations and Barbarian Kingdoms in the Light of Funerary Archaeology in Gaul," in *Romans and Barbarians*, ed. R. W. Mathisen and D. R. Shanzer (Ashgate, 2010), 299–330.

this burial mode is displayed should be assigned to Germanic wives of barbarian soldiers from the east coming into a region where Germanic dressed burial customs that had been vigorous a couple of generations before had faded (though not disappeared) in the earlier 5th century and were now being revived, particularly among elite Franks.⁵⁰

In their most recent paper, Kazanski and Périn push their argument farther. Material culture, as reflected in archeology is not, they warn, by itself a reliable guide to ethnic identity. The cultural self-identification plausibly inferred from a particular set of funerary customs need not coincide, at a particular moment, with a cultural identity given in written sources. The later-5th- to early-6th-century weapons-and-ornament-accompanied burials in northern Gaul/Belgica/Germania need not, and probably were not meant to, identify the subjects as members of a particular “barbarian” group. Most probably they identified them as privileged “foreigners,” members of a new military elite brought into the ethnically very heterogeneous military milieu of the Roman west in the turbulent years after the fall of Aetius. The female costume signaled by such items as the rectangular plate-buckle and the pair of radiate-headed silver-plated fibula pairs with a long lozenge-shaped foot worn at the neck point particularly to the style of prestige that had flourished in the Danube in the mid-5th century, when Attila had been the military master of choice. By preserving this dress style in a funerary context in Gaul in the days of Childeric and Clovis (a time when, in the post-Hunnic Danube, the style had changed), these elite soldiers, through their wives, were proclaiming a new, prestigious, cultural identity, perhaps not yet ethnically definite. Or to put it another way, this “Danubian souvenir style” might have been used by women married to Gothic officers in Vidimir’s army, or to Alans, or for that matter to Franks who had returned from service in Pannonia.⁵¹

What is surely significant however, is that by the time of the Battle of Vouillé a funerary horizon characterized by both male burials with weapons-panoplies and female burials with ethnically significant ornament was spreading

50 The argument for this revival of “Germanic” burial customs widespread in northern Gaul and Germany in the 4th/early 5th centuries as a cultural marker of an emerging “Gallo-Belgo-Frankish military elite” in the late 5th/early 6th centuries was first developed in Patrick Périn, “A propos de publications récentes concernant le peuplement en Gaule à l’époque mérovingienne: la ‘question franque,’” *Archéologie Médiévale* 11 (1981): 125–45. See also B. K. Young, “The Barbarian Funerary Tradition in Gaul in the Light of the Archaeological Record: Considerations and Reconsiderations,” in *Minorities and Barbarians in Medieval Life and Thought*, ed. Susan J. Ridyard and Robert G. Benson, *Sewanee Mediaeval Studies* 7 (1996): 197–222.

51 M. Kazanski and P. Périn. “‘Foreign’ Objects in the Merovingian Cemeteries of Northern Gaul,” In *Foreigners in Early Medieval Europe. Thirteen International Studies on Early Medieval Mobility*, ed. Dieter Quast, (Mainz, 2009), 149–67.

widely and rapidly in precisely those regions brought under Frankish control by Childeric and Clovis.⁵² It is reasonable to argue that, by that date, a coincidence between funerary custom, archeologically recovered, and ethnic identity had taken place: the successful military elite was proclaiming itself “Frankish” in allegiance to the successful Merovingian dynasty.

One now might return to the question of the Visigoths in the light of this suggestion. They had been settled in the Toulouse region since 418, and since the 480s had been moving into Spain in force, but had not hitherto been practicing dressed burial (although their women no doubt dressed in a fashion close to the “Danube souvenir” mode of northern Gaul discussed above, deriving from the same prototypes). If, as seems possible, dressed burial, focused on female costume, started to catch on with the Visigoths around the time of the Battle of Vouillé, might it not have been inspired by the new style in the north? Would not this adoption amount to another kind of Frankish victory, in the cultural domain? Thus an ethnically distinctive Visigothic funerary archeology would have been found at last—ironically, just as the Visigoths themselves were being expelled from Aquitaine. And from this perspective, the Frankish victory at Vouillé was even more complete: not only did the Franks expel the Visigoths from their Gallic domains, they also prevented them from leaving a record in the material culture.

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52 Périn and Feffer, *Les Francs*, 1.187–201.

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